Mrs A Van Vallen

THE
NEW YORK LEDGER
DEVOTED TO CHOICE LITERATURE, ROMANCE, THE NEWS AND COMMERCE

VOL. XXVIII. ROBERT BONNER, {COR. OF WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STS. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1872. TERMS. {$3 PER ANNUM, IN ADVANCE. NO. 31.

SLEEP.

BY EMMA ALICE BROWNE.

Sleep! my little one, sleep!
  Yonder the Eve Star gleams.
What if the world should waken and weep?
  Sleep is the mystical key
That opens the wonderful door of dreams,
  And barreth out sorrow from thee and me.
Sleep, my little one, sleep!

High over the whispering woods,
  All in a golden glow,
The pearly rim of the young moon broods,
  And under the roof-tree green and high
The west wind maketh a murmur low,
Rocking the red rose to and fro,
  To the tune of an ancient lullaby—
Sleep, my little one, sleep!

Sleep is the sister of Death,
  And Death is the long, still dream, I guess,
That sealeth the fountains of pulse and breath,
  And setteth the gates of Life ajar,
Over whose darkened threshold goeth
  The weary soul, like a wandering star,
  Seeking the heavenly dawn, afar
From earth and her earthly wretchedness.
  Sleep, my little one, sleep!

The Plot Against Hawley;

OR, THE

PRISONER OF DESOLATION.

By **LEON LEWIS**,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOY MAGICIAN," "RED KNIFE," "THE BROKEN HOME," "EDDY'S SEARCH," "THE CLUB-FOOT BEAR," "MARK HEBER'S LUCK," ETC.

CHAPTER XXI.

MISS DAIL'S COMMUNICATIONS.

The manner in which Miss Dail proceeded to the business of her interview with Mrs. Hawley was direct and incisive, as is usually the manner of persons dominated by a single idea, but there was not the least trace of weakness or excitement about her.

This is equivalent to saying that her appearance, on the occasion of this second call, presented a complete contrast with the appearance she had presented on the former occasion.

She was "like another woman," as the quick-eyed Jenny had mentioned.

"My call has been announced to you, Mrs. Hawley, I hear?" said Miss Dail, after the preliminaries of the interview had been gracefully rendered.

"Yes, Miss Dail, it has. Your friends have just left me—Mr. Wilber and Mr. Jilson. Are you aware of the business that brought them here?"

"Perfectly, Mrs. Hawley, and I am glad to congratulate you upon the good news from your uncle, and upon the insight you have begun to receive in regard to Pedder's villainy."

"Begun—to receive?" faltered Mrs. Hawley, with an involuntary flutter. "I do not know all of that man's wickedness then?"

"You have it nearly all to learn, Madam. The affair of that forged order for your uncle's letter is a mere drop in the bucket!"

The voice of the young lady was almost metallic in its calmness. She had evidently schooled herself to the task she had undertaken. She had the serenity of certainty, and the implacability of a duty. She knew the ground upon which she was treading.

"I—I am prepared, of course, after what has happened," said Mrs. Hawley—"I am prepared to hear of other things to the disadvantage of Captain Pedder. And I suppose, from all that has been said and suggested, that you are prepared, Miss Dail, to communicate to me still other proofs of Pedder's wickedness and treachery?"

"The supposition is quite correct, Mrs. Hawley. I have come to you, this second time, with the intention of posting you fully in regard to the nature of this man's dealings with you."

A pin could have been heard to fall in the room, as Miss Dail settled herself still more firmly in her chair.

"I will begin with a question," resumed Miss Dail—"a bold, intrusive question, perhaps, but an honest one. Has this man made any impression upon your heart? In other terms, has he become anything to you?"

At the very thought of Pedder's becoming anything to her, Mrs. Hawley looked as if a deadly serpent had suddenly appeared immediately in her pathway.

"Ah! I am answered," went on Miss Dail quietly. "That look of horror and loathing attests that Pedder has not advanced a step in the path he has attempted to follow."

"He *has* attempted something, then?" murmured Mrs. Hawley, half to herself. "He has been pursuing some scheme of his own, as I have more than once had the horrible torture of suspecting?"

"He has, Mrs. Hawley, and I am glad to hear that you have had of your own notion a glimmering of the fact. This man has not only been pursuing a scheme of his own, for many months past, but that scheme is of the most fiendish description. He has been seeking all these months to 'make himself useful,' to fix your attention, to become necessary to you, to eventually propose to you again, for the third time, and to crown his unscrupulous wickedness by dragging you to the idle and infamous ceremony of a marriage!"

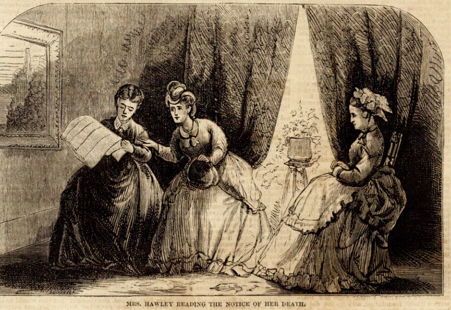
"And *you*, Miss Dail—*you* have discovered the proofs not only of Pedder's action, but of the motives of his action?"

"As you are now to hear, Mrs. Hawley. Nor need you wonder that I have been 'raised up' to enlighten you in regard to these very vital interests. The world in which we live is a cruel one—a scene of trials, a school in which we are all placed upon probation. The best and happiest life that was ever given to any mortal is, in many respects, a life of agony. But, after all, there is a just God visible in everything around us, and even in all the darknesses by which we are afflicted. There is, after all, a merciful and beneficent Eye which oversees all our affairs, and a powerful Hand which overrules even the wickedness of men. And my presence here to-day, Mrs. Hawley, is a living proof of these facts."

"I begin to feel so," acknowledged Mrs. Hawley. "I thank you for coming. Say on."

"I have not formed any definite plan as to *how* I shall say what I have to say to you," continued Miss Dail. "Perhaps we may as well begin at the beginning of your relations with Captain Pedder. He first met you at Mrs. Welby's party, some three years ago, and it is safe to say that from that hour to this he has known but one really dominant thought—that of becoming your husband. Do you remember where and when he first proposed to you? It was the evening after the funeral of Mrs. Eldridge, your kind protectress and benefactress of so many years. Do you remember what you told him on that occasion? You declared to him that you would never promise to become any man's wife until you loved that man supremely and forever. And it was in vain that he urged your friendless situation as a reason for accepting him—equally in vain that he affirmed that he would be satisfied with having your respect and esteem, leaving affection to grow out of those calmer sentiments—"

ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS, IN THE YEAR 1872, BY ROBERT BONNER, IN THE OFFICE OF THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS, AT WASHINGTON.



MRS. HAWLEY READING THE NOTICE OF HER DEATH.

The gesture with which Mrs. Hawley interrupted these observations was expressive of the startled wonder her every feature attested.

"You speak as—as if you were present on the occasion," she said. "And as I have never mentioned any of those matters to any human being, you can comprehend at once how greatly you are surprising me. I would like to know where you got your information."

"I got it from the lips of Captain Pedder and his sister," answered Miss Dail. "But hear me further, please. After the death of Mrs. Eldridge, you became a 'lady's companion,' and it was in that situation that you made the acquaintance of Mr. Hawley, who not long after that event began paying you his addresses in due form. Do you remember when and where Pedder's second proposal of marriage was made? It was the very evening after you received notice from Mrs. Moller that she did not require your further services."

"It was," assented Mrs. Hawley, staring at the young lady as if fascinated. "You know all those matters as well as I know them myself."

"I know them even better than you do, as you are now to learn," said Miss Dail. "You did not know at the time why Mrs. Moller discharged you, and you do not now know why it was, but I can tell you. Mrs. Moller discharged you because Captain Pedder declared to her that you were a bad character, and that the young gentleman waiting upon you—Mr. Hawley—was even worse than yourself."

Mrs. Hawley was too astounded and shocked to utter the least word.

"You can hardly credit a fact so monstrous," resumed Miss Dail, "nor could I, had I not heard Pedder himself, night before last, recalling the circumstance and laughing over it, declaring it a 'good one,' and congratulating himself alike upon Mrs. Moller's 'credulity' and upon your 'refreshing ignorance.'"

"You begin to thoroughly shock me," said Mrs. Hawley, pale with her emotions. "It's my turn to be excited to-day, as I was saying to Mrs. Piper just before your entrance."

"Our positions are indeed reversed to-day. When I was here before, I was a prey to a cruel agitation—tortured by a thousand ill-defined horrors which had been suggested to me, rather than clearly revealed and proven—"

"Oh, that is my position to-day exactly," interrupted Mrs. Hawley, with a tremor that was almost a shiver.

"But to-day all is changed! My uncertainty has become certainty. My sentiment of horror has given place to a sense of duty."

"And you have not yet revealed all the horrors you have discovered?"

"I have merely begun to reveal them—merely commenced, my poor, dear Mrs. Hawley."

There was such pity—such respect—such a profound sympathy—such a caressing tenderness, in the commonplace term of endearment that had thus escaped Miss Dail's lips, that the eyes of Mrs. Hawley filled with tears.

"Am I, then, so much to be pitied?" she murmured, moving nearer to her visitress, and taking one of her hands in her own.

"In some respects, you are, of all the sorrowing women in the world, one of those the most entitled to pity, since you are the victim of a most iniquitous conspiracy," declared Miss Dail softly. "But in other respects, you are, of all sorrowing souls, one of those the most entitled to congratulations, since you have by your side such a friend and helper as I am about to prove myself to you. Believe me, dear Mrs. Hawley, I am not here to torture you vainly—not here to bewail calamities which are final in their nature, and which must accordingly continue to afflict you forever. No, no. I am here to pain you only while I am enlightening you, just as a kind physician may pain his patient while he is probing a terrible wound—"

"There is light beyond all this darkness, then?"

"A glorious light! A light more radiant than you have ever dreamed of—the light of perfect day."

There was a pause of a few moments' duration, and then Mrs. Hawley broke the silence.

"Go on now," she said. "I feel stronger—calmer. You are indeed a comforter."

"It results from all I have been saying," continued Miss Dail, "that Pedder, for years past, has been bending all his thoughts and actions to the one task of obtaining your hand in marriage."

"This much is certain."

"And it is now further in evidence that Pedder, in pursuing his design, has not paused at any wickedness. He caused you, for instance, to be driven from a good home in order to render his renewed offer of marriage acceptable."

"You heard the truth from his own lips, or it would be too horrible for credence."

"Very well, Mrs. Hawley. And such being Pedder's aim, such his unscrupulous character, does it not seem natural that he should have continued his wicked course after your marriage to Mr. Hawley, as well as before?"

Mrs. Hawley started.

"Why, of course," she replied. "Pedder's conduct before my marriage having been what you have now proven it, his conduct since my marriage falls at once under suspicion."

"Good. I may now make a suggestion. I suggest to you, therefore, that the action of Pedder, in giving your husband a place on the *Childers*, was an action open to suspicion."

Mrs. Hawley started again.

"I have had vague fears upon that point," she said, "but you speak as if certain that there was something wrong in Pedder's conduct."

"There *was* something wrong, Mrs. Hawley. His conduct in every step he has taken has been as false as infamous. Take that affair of the two thousand dollars, for example."

"The affair of the two thousand dollars!"

"The money he pretends to have paid you as the fruit of a little venture he shared with your husband. He never had any such venture. The money in question came out of his own pocket. I've heard him say so repeatedly."

Mrs. Hawley looked bewildered.

"But why should Pedder give me such a large sum of money?" she demanded.

"It was a part of his scheme. The money was given you in a check, you may remember?"

"Yes, and so were the five hundred dollars of Minnell & Co."

"Of course; and all in pursuance of a purpose. These two checks were given you on the fourth of July."

Mrs. Hawley and Mrs. Piper both recalled the fact, after a moment's reflection.

"So that you could not draw the money until the day following. And that same fourth of July Pedder sent a villain, a mere tool, to engage board of Mrs. Piper, under the name of Deacon Abraham Sanborn. The real name of this villain is Tom Breeling. Breeling stole the checks during the night, and took them to Pedder. Pedder forged your signature, Mrs. Hawley, and that of Minnell & Co., and then gave the checks back to Breeling, telling him to find some boy to present them at the bank. And so the scheme went on—Pedder visiting the bank officials, securing the checks, and eventually procuring the money for you upon them."

Mrs. Hawley and Mrs. Piper had both listened to these revelations in a stupor of amazement.

"I must say of these facts, as I have said of the others, that I have them from Pedder's own lips," continued Miss Dail. "Have you at hand, Mrs. Hawley, a list of the passengers of the *Childers* upon her late voyage?"

"Certainly," and the list was instantly produced from a table drawer.

"Run your eye over that list," said Miss Dail, "and you will soon encounter the name of Mr. Breeling."

"Yes; here it is."

"This Mr. Breeling is the Tom Breeling I have mentioned—the villain who has had a hand in nearly all of the rascalities and infamies his employer has ever committed."

"The couple were together, then, upon that fatal voyage? For what purpose?"

"A very natural question. One of the purposes of Pedder was to have Breeling start the water casks of the *Childers* at a given moment—to waste the drinking water of the ship purposely, you know—"

"But why waste it?"

"So as to make an excuse for calling at the island of Desolation."

"Pedder had business at Desolation, then?"

"Yes, secret business. He could not call openly and directly, and so he directed Breeling to waste the water, as a way of obtaining the necessary excuse for calling."

"But what was the nature of that secret business?" asked Mrs. Hawley, more and more excited.

"Why, he wished to decoy a man ashore upon the island, and here Breeling again came into use, for Breeling was sent ashore before the victim, with orders to put on a crazy looking disguise of some kind, and to assail the victim from behind at the proper moment, and drag him away from the cliff whereon the assault was to be made, and so leave Mr. Moody and the rest to suppose mistakenly—*mistakenly*, mind you—that the victim had tumbled over the cliff into the sea—"

"My God! what *do* you mean?" cried Mrs. Hawley, whose excitement was now almost a frenzy.

"Why, I mean that the victim was so assaulted, so dragged away, and so reported dead; but the actual truth of all this matter is, that the victim of Pedder and Breeling did not fall over the cliff, and did not die, but was *abandoned alive* upon that horrible island—abandoned while he was in the act of recovering his senses—abandoned after a pretended search for his body—abandoned deliberately and purposely by Captain Pedder and his abettor—"

Mrs. Hawley uttered such a cry of anguished horror that only Miss Dail, in her forced and unnatural calmness, could have endured it—such a cry that Mrs. Piper recoiled several yards from her, becoming as pale as a corpse.

"And now calmness! calmness!" enjoined Miss Dail, with a potent authority of voice and manner, as she drew her slight figure commandingly erect. "You have borne the shock of thinking your husband dead, and now you must bear with equal courage the corresponding shock—the shock of knowing, as I know, that your husband did not die at Desolation, as has been reported, but that he was infamously abandoned there, and that he is, in all probability, at this very day and hour still living!"

CHAPTER XXII.

A COMPLETE ILLUMINATION.

The silence that succeeded the announcement of Miss Dail for the next minute was appalling.

Without a movement, without even a tremor, Mrs. Hawley sat bolt upright, her eyes staring fixedly at her visitress.

She seemed to have been turned to stone.

Miss Dail had fully expected her to lose her consciousness, being aware that she had fainted when Mr. Moody informed her of her husband's death, but this expectation was doomed to a happy disappointment.

The simple truth is, there was a vast difference between the two announcements—a difference upon which Miss Dail had not sufficiently reflected.

The one was an announcement of death, and as such, had all the chill and depression with which death is justly associated.

But the other announcement was of *life!*

The young wife and mother did not faint, therefore, and it cannot even be said that she suffered—or if so, it was a glorious suffering—as she took in at every sense of heart and brain the glad truth or probability, or discovery—whatever it may be termed—that her husband was still in the land of the living.

For about the space we have named she could not move or speak.

"I am still giving you the facts as I have heard them from the lips of Pedder and his sister," continued Miss Dail, with the shadow of a smile, as she saw how well the poor young wife was bearing the news.

"And you assert distinctly—"

"I assert distinctly that your husband was abandoned alive at Desolation—"

"But why? To what end?"

"Why, to the end that Pedder might return to New York, long before his victim could possibly escape or be rescued, and woo and win the pretended widow!"

"Great Heavens! is it possible that Pedder is such a fiend incarnate? He would have led me to the altar, if he could, with the knowledge that my husband is living?"

"That has all along been his purpose."

"Ah! I now understand the words with which you gave me such a shock a few moments ago—the reference you made to 'the idle and infamous ceremony of a marriage.' Your thought is now plain. If Pedder had succeeded, I should have committed bigamy, and he would not have been in any way bound to me as a husband!"

"That was the thought underlying my strange expression, and such would have been the precise state of the case, in the event of Pedder's project becoming successful."

"And can it be that there is a woman on the earth so utterly lost as to take part in such an infamous scheme? Can Miss Ruth Pedder, against whose character or reputation I have never heard the least word uttered—can she have joined her brother in this web of horrors?"

"Joined him! The plot was invented and proposed by Miss Pedder herself. It seems that the brother was nearly frantic upon hearing of your marriage to Mr. Hawley, but that he thought of no other course of conduct than to accept the marriage as a finality, as the final end of all his hopes in regard to you. But the sister declared that she would never consent to your having Will. Hawley. She said that she would dig a pit between you and your husband as wide as the ocean, and then she went on to elaborate the very scheme that has since been so remorselessly carried into execution."

"And the various steps of this scheme have been—"

"First, to pretend friendship, where the real sentiments of the couple were everything evil. Second, to give Mr. Hawley a place on the *Childers*. Third, to abandon him at Desolation, in such a clever way that all on board the ship, save Pedder and Breeling, would suppose him to be dead. Fourth, for Pedder to slip back to New York and marry you. Fifth, for Miss Pedder herself to sail for Desolation, under pretended medical advice, and so fly to the rescue of Mr. Hawley—"

"But has Miss Pedder taken any such share in this infamy?"

"She is its master-spirit. She has planned everything—taken the lead in everything."

"And she really intends to sail for Desolation? She is really going?"

"Going? She has gone! She sailed yesterday in the *Childers!*"

Mrs. Hawley was startled nearly as much by this announcement as by any that had preceded it.

"Your revelations are taking a fearful consistency," she murmured. "Miss Pedder would not undertake such a voyage without she knew—or at least believed—that my husband is still living."

"Quite right. Miss Pedder feels as certain of Mr. Hawley's existence as she does of her own. She has taken along a nice wardrobe, with all the latest fashions, and means to woo Mr. Hawley with all the arts and powers at her disposal. As a step toward this task, the brother and sister have inserted in a daily paper a notice of your death—"

"Of mine?"

"Of yours, dear Mrs. Hawley. Here is the notice in question."

She produced a copy of the paper, and pointed out, in a long list of notices, under the head of "Died," a few lines reading as follows:

"HAWLEY. On Tuesday, June 30, very suddenly, at her residence in Fourth street, Mrs. WILLIAM HAWLEY, relict of the late William Hawley, and only daughter of the late Carmichael Aymar.

"Funeral to-morrow (Thursday) from her late residence, at two o'clock. The friends of the family are respectfully invited to attend without further notice."

Perhaps the face of Mrs. Hawley was never whiter in the world than when she had finished reading this infamous falsehood.

"I can hardly realize that I am in possession of my senses," she murmured. "And Pedder has dared to print such a notice under my very eyes?"

"Why not, pray? Scores of such false notices are printed in the papers of this city every year—some for one purpose, and others for another. You have never seen this announcement before?"

"Never. If I had, it would have been corrected long ago, for I see that the paper is some ten days old. It's not too late to correct it now?"

"Of course not; but it's too late for the correction to interfere with the working of this falsehood," said Miss Dail. "Miss Pedder has taken a copy of this paper along with her, and it is her intention to show it to Mr. Hawley, as a preliminary step toward her proposed wooing."

"The horrible creature!"

"Of course neither Pedder nor his sister has ever cared the snap of a finger whether you saw the false notice of your death or not. If you had seen it, why, it would have appeared that some enemy had put the notice into the paper to annoy you. There it is, in black and white, and very good evidence of your death it will seem to Mr. Hawley, when it is brought to his notice."

"This is monstrous. But how is Miss Pedder to visit the island of Desolation without provoking suspicion, at least on the part of my husband?"

"Pedder has given out that she is crazy. He reports that she thought a great deal of Mr. Hawley, and even expected to marry him until some petty disagreement between them caused him to transfer his attentions to you—"

"Oh! the cruel slanderers! And Pedder is making these assertions?"

"To his owners, at least, and to all such persons as are brought into contact with his sister."

"And she pretends to be insane?"

"Yes, and has taken along with her a male and female keeper—a married couple named Gawler."

"But what is the nature of her insanity?"

"Why, she cries out continually and wildly that Mr. Hawley is not dead—that he is still living at Desolation—that she can hear him calling upon her to come to his release! And Pedder has forged a letter of advice to show to his owners—a letter in which he is advised to take his sister to Desolation. 'As the man is really dead, and as she won't find him there, the hallucination will work its own cure as soon as she pays the island a visit.' Such is a sentence from the letter in question, and such is the pretended advice upon which Miss Pedder has undertaken the long voyage.

She will, of course, show the letter of advice to Mr. Hawley, when she has encountered him, and opportunely recovered her senses—"

Mrs. Hawley uttered a moan that was made up equally of horror and of indignation.

"But all that you have been telling me, Miss Dail," she exclaimed—"all these things constitute one of the most wicked and elaborate plots ever formed for the destruction of a wedded couple's happiness."

"And that is just what it is—one of the most fiendish plots ever formed," returned Miss Dail emphatically.

"But how have all these facts come to your knowledge, Miss Dail?" asked Mrs. Piper, for the first time feeling at liberty to take part in the conversation.

"I will tell you. Do you remember how I came to live with Miss Pedder?"

"Yes. She advertised for a 'companion' to share her house with her in the absence of her brother upon a long voyage, and you answered the advertisement."

"I have accordingly had a room over Miss Pedder's back parlor for nearly a year past," said Miss Dail, "and very well indeed have I got along with Miss Pedder, as with her brother. There has never been the least hard feeling between us, and I must even do them both the justice of saying that they have extended to me a great deal of kindness."

"And that is why you were so deeply agitated at the thought of believing ill of them?" murmured Mrs. Piper.

"Very naturally. But since the return of Captain Pedder from his last voyage, some three weeks ago, I have lived a life, until within a day or two, that can only be compared to the lot of some poor bird imprisoned in a hot oven. My tortures began in this way: In the floor of my room, at the head of my bed, there is a hole which was formerly used for the pipe of a register—"

Mrs. Hawley and Mrs. Piper exchanged glances of comprehension.

"I comprehend the whole thing already," said the former. "This hole in the floor—"

"Was covered with an ill-fitting piece of board, and with the carpet—covered in such a way, in fact, that it was easy to hear everything that was going on in the room below."

Mrs. Piper even smiled at this juncture.

"And you accordingly overheard some remark that passed between the brother and sister," said Mrs. Hawley, "soon after the return of Pedder from his last voyage—some remark that fixed your attention."

"I did—I did! The first remark I overheard was an allusion to the fact of Mr. Hawley's being 'safely hived,' as Pedder coarsely put it, upon the island of Desolation."

"And so you listened further?" asked Mrs. Piper.

"I not only listened further, but I have listened from that day to this. I hate eavesdropping as I do any other meanness whatever, and it would have been hard for me to have been compelled to invoke that low vice, but that hole in the floor spared me alike from all self-reproach and all trouble. I was in my room, which was duly paid for, and I was not obliged to fill my ears with cotton for anybody. If Pedder and his sister ever knew of that hole in the floor, the fact must have escaped their memory, for they have been in the habit of seating themselves directly under it, night after night, and there discussing their hellish hopes and plans with all the freedom of unblushing depravity."

"And what a fortunate circumstance for you, Mrs. Hawley, has been that hole in the floor!" cried Mrs. Piper.

"And especially the pair of good ears above it," said Mrs. Hawley, as she drew Miss Dail to her heart.

"For a day or two—and indeed until the day of my first visit here," resumed Miss Dail—"I was in a state of mind bordering upon distraction. I had heard just enough to suspect and fear the existence of the plot that actually exists, but not enough to face such a formidable certificate of Mr. Hawley's death as you brought to my notice. I retired, therefore, catching at the hope that my fears might prove fallacious, but the very evening succeeding, all my fears were confirmed, and from that time to the present, I have been listening, with a constantly increasing equanimity, to all that this precious couple have had to say to each other. I should require hours, of course, to detail the substance of these repeated consultations, recollections, and suggestions."

"And are you stopping at the house of the Pedders now, Miss Dail?" asked Mrs. Hawley.

"No. Miss Pedder gave me notice, some ten days ago, that I must look up a new home, as she was going to be absent about a year, and as it would not be proper for me to remain in the house after her departure. I had some difficulty, however, in finding a place that suited me, and so I excused myself from day to day for staying on, for I had a great deal of interest in the conversations to which I was being a listener. I did not take my leave, therefore, until day before yesterday."

"I wish I could have known what was going on in time to have listened to some of those conversations," said Mrs. Hawley earnestly.

"There is yet time for a measure of the kind," said Miss Dail.

"Why, what do you mean?"

"I mean that Tom Breeling will call upon Pedder to-night, at nine o'clock, to consult with him as to what further remains to be done, and how to do it," exclaimed Miss Dail. "This interview will take place in the back parlor, immediately under my room, in all probability, and if you care to listen to what is said, why, I have paid for the room up to next Friday, and here is something that will admit us to the house—the pass-key I have been in the habit of using."

She held up the key in question as she spoke.

"Thank God!" cried Mrs. Hawley, with a flush of resolution. "I will be there!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

QUOTED IN FULL.

You have doubtless heard the story of the Chinaman who, in making a new pair of breeches for the American Captain, with an old pair for a pattern, followed his copy so literally as to reproduce a stitched rent and two patches. But the ludicrousness of this following was entirely thrown in the shade by the mistake of an honest, literal servant who had taken the job of the finishing stone work of a new church in Briersport. The presiding clergyman of the parish was chairman of the committee on ornamentation, and it was decided that a suitable quotation of Holy Writ should be graven upon the capstone of the portal, over the main entrance. In accordance therewith the workman was directed to carve upon the stone the sentence,—"My House shall be called the House of Prayer." The man acknowledged his literary deficiencies, and in order that he might make no mistake, he asked for an exact copy of what was wanted. The clergyman, being in somewhat of a hurry, and having a small pocket Testament with him, took it out, and opening to the twenty-first chapter of Matthew, and pointing to the thirteenth verse, he said,—

"There, my man, you have it just as we want it."

The craftsman took the book, and the clergyman went his way.

The dedication of the church was postponed a week to await the finishing of the cap-stone. It was done in time, and raised to its place, and the consternation of the good minister, and his companions of the committee, can be better imagined than described upon beholding how literally with a vengeance the workman had copied the text of Scripture. Commencing at the point designated by the clergyman, he had reproduced the whole verse, so that the stone bore upon its face the startling sentence:

"*My House shall be called the House of Prayer; but ye have made it a Den of Thieves!*"

There was a further postponement of the dedicatory services, and in the end the lower half of the cap-stone was adorned with a network of chisellings and clippings not contemplated by the original plan. C.

VIOLET'S STORY.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

Violets lie hidden in mossy nooks, waiting for fond eyes to discover their sweetness. Perhaps Violet Marten's parents hoped for such a fate for their darling when they named her.

"Her eyes are not blue, but violet," said the young father.

"And Violet is such a pretty name," said the younger mother; "let us name her so."

And Violet was christened in the little village church, and grew up from a pretty baby and a beautiful child to be a sweet, pure, fair young girl, and sang in the choir so sweetly that strangers wondered to hear her there, and men nearly twisted their necks off as they sat in the front pews, to see the face of the singer.

Hither, to the quiet Yankee village, came one summer Otto Balche, who had trained I know not how many professional singers—a wondrous teacher and a rare musician; and going, for a rarity, to church, he heard the voice to some purpose; sought out the girl, and taught her, in true artist generosity and enthusiasm, all that could be taught in one summer.

Little the good Yankee mother guessed what "the nice old German gentleman, who liked to sing with Violet," was doing for her child; but Violet, artist at heart herself, quite understood.

That was a happy summer. Violet looked back upon it now with many tears. That fall a pestilence had swept through the village, and the good mother and father, almost young people yet, were smitten by it, and lay under one willow in the church-yard. And the old home was in stranger hands. And Otto Balche had gone home to the Fatherland, and there died. And the fair, pure, lily-like girl was earning her bread as a chorus singer in an opera troupe, and boarding in a by-street with an old laundress.

She knew no one. The girls and women shocked her by their Bohemian ways. Of the men she was shy. They were not a bit like the members of the village church, or any other men she had ever met. The manager she knew, for he gave her her orders and fixed her salary. And a mild-looking lame gentleman who sat in the ticket office gave her a kindly "good-day," or "good-night," when she passed him, which seemed to comfort her. He was not like the others; he was a gentleman, though evidently not a rich one. And there was something in that crutch with its worn velvet handle which awakened her womanly commiseration, and made her voice and smile, as she answered, more gentle than she knew.

The opera was over one night, in the frosty mid-winter. The important personages had gone home in carriages. The chorus girls and women had been gayly whisked away by escorts, or surlily dragged away by husbands, or had gone home strong in numbers, linked arm in arm. The fair-faced Yankee girl, in her black silk alpaca, and quiet shawl and hood, peeped out into the night with her violet eyes, and waited for a band of jolly singers to pass by, ere she encountered the ordeal of her run home—that dreadful quarter of an hour, through which her heart beat with terror and ached with loneliness.

Her little feet, venturing forth at last, pattered over the pavement at a swift rate; but she was more nervous than usual, and this time surely some one was following her. At the corner of the dusky street in which her lodging lay, she could not avoid glancing around to convince herself that her fears were without foundation, and as she did so, her eyes met those of a man, flashy, half tipsy, and indescribably insolent, who caught her by the arm.

"Stop a minute," he said. "What's the matter? I've been waiting for you an hour."

"You mistake. I don't know you. Let me go," said Violet.

The man laughed.

"Look here; be quiet. Don't take airs," he began. "You're a mighty pretty girl. Who are you?"

"Let go my arm," said Violet, terrified by hearing another step approaching.

But the man, rather in malicious fun than anything else, held her faster.

"Give me a kiss, and may be I will," he said.

He advanced his face to hers, his breath reeking with the fumes of liquor. Violet grew faint.

Suddenly another hand touched her arm. She was gently taken under protection.

"This lady is under my care," said a voice that she knew.

And she looked up into the face of the gentleman whose "good-night" had been the kindest word yet spoken to her in that dismal opera-house.

The tipsy man drew back. He was a big fellow, and for a moment he doubled his big fists quite savagely. Then he muttered:

"I don't want to interfere. If women will walk the street, what can they expect?" and sauntered off sullenly.

"Let me see you safe the rest of the way, Miss Marten," said her new friend to Violet, who was now sobbing, despite her efforts to be calm. "You were very much frightened?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are always nervous during this late walk home?"

"I'm afraid so. I have been used to being taken care of. Before papa died, I never lived in a city, or alone."

"You shall not be so terrified again," said the gentleman. "If you will allow me, I will see you safe every night."

"Oh, how kind! but it will be so much trouble," said Violet naively.

He laughed.

"A trouble! no, a very great pleasure. Besides, it is nothing new either. I have taken the liberty of walking behind you to see no harm befell you, every night for weeks. You are not used to it like those others, and you looked so frightened when you peered out into the street. You'll excuse me, I know."

"It was so very good of you," said Violet. "To think that any one cared whether I was frightened or not. I don't know how to thank you."

He gave her a smile that made his face beautiful in an instant, and coming to the door, bade her "good-night."

So it began. As long as she made one of the company, Arthur Hurst saw Violet Marten to her home after the opera was over, and a very pleasant intimacy was the first result. Long walks out of town on Sunday afternoons—holiday hours, in which Violet sang her repertoire of songs through for her friend, and when they talked to each other as only those who like each other will ever do.

His was a blighted life, in some sort. A motherless boy, whose intemperate father had, in a wild moment, brought upon the child the accident which had marred proportions originally cast in Nature's fairest mould. His ventures in after-life had proved fruitless. His little hoard had melted away under ill-considered speculations, and with failing health and courage, he had settled down to the monotonous life he now led.

"There is nothing to look forward to," he said. "I earn my pittance. I read my books. I rest, when I can, under green trees. So my life goes. At last I shall rest for ever in some quiet spot. It would be no different were I as ambitious as I used to be. The grave ends all, for all of us."

And Violet told him of her home, of her parents, and of old Otto Balche.

The rehearsals and the chorus singing were brighter tasks, now that this friendship had dawned. Violet began to feel almost happy again.

After they had parted at the door, and the old widow woman with whom she boarded had appeared in slippers and a night-cap and shawl, to give her her poor little supper, she used to go up to her garret and lie awake, thinking of Arthur Hurst. She was so sorry for him, and so thankful to him. She longed so to be rich, that she might secretly bestow upon him great gifts. The pain-lined face was beautiful to her; indeed it was an exquisite face, but for those lines: great Spanish eyes, a soft, full-lipped mouth, and hair that curled close about white temples. His infirmity was only pitiful to her, not repulsive.

"My friend" she had called him for a long while, when one day, coming down the long, dark passage that led to the regions which lay behind the stage, she espied him, herself unseen. He sat in his little den, counting or sorting tickets, his mind hardly on them. The sadness of his face was intense. All the disappointments and losses of his life seemed written there. Violet stood still, and looked.

"My darling!" she said to herself, under her breath, "my own poor darling!"

And then she knew that she loved him, and sped away, fearing nothing so much as that he should see her, dreading nothing so much as a meeting with him then. But from that moment, whatever the rest of the world saw in Arthur Hurst, she saw only her idol. Man loves the woman who is beautiful to him; to woman, the man she loves becomes beautiful.

She was a little colder to him after this, I think, fearing lest she should seem too warm, for there had been no lovers' talk between them, nor had he ever so much as held her hand in his longer than for a courteous greeting. She did not know how very beautiful she was, nor did it ever enter her mind that he might think himself an unlikely object for woman's tenderness. Love's blindness was upon her, and love's timidity.

The time passed on. Her engagement drew to a close, and to her surprise, a new prospect offered. Her voice had been heard by a country manager who desired some one to sing for him, and she could not refuse the opportunity. Yet, as the time approached for departure, bitter tears rained down upon her pillow. In leaving the city and her sordid lodgings, she left also her one friend; not her lover, but the man she loved. The beautiful girl felt that she was leaving all life held of sweetness. And he—he would forget her, she said to herself. What was there in her to remember? Quite hidden within her soul lay these regrets and fears. They had their last Sunday walk together, their last hour in the lodging-house parlor, where she had sung to him so often. And she said as much quietly, and he drew closer to her, and for the first time took her hand.

"I may write, and hear from you?" he asked.

"O yes; I shall be glad. I shall be lonely."

He put the hand to his lips.

"Let me prophecy," he said. "There are days before you in which you will win gold and fame. You will have so many friends, so many flatterers, that you will quite forget the little man who told you from the first what you would one day do. You will forget to write at last, and then I shall hear—" he paused—"all sorts of pleasant things of you," he added lightly, having begun very gravely. "Good-bye."

He kissed her on her forehead, and was gone. She felt the pressure of those lips upon her brow for many days. She had longed to fling her arms about his neck and give him a woman's passionate farewell kiss, but she dared not. And she went upon her new path next day sore of heart, despite the little triumph of advancement. And those letters, not very frequent, were the brightest spots of all her life.

The prophecy was in a fair way of fulfillment, as far as her success went. It grew fashionable to praise Violet's singing. She travelled over the country, and won new laurels everywhere. Admirers flocked around her. Serenades were given her. Diamonds were buried in flowers and flung at her feet. And a lover, handsome, young and wealthy, pursued her from place to place, refusing to believe himself rejected, and vain and courageous enough to believe that success was at last to be his meed.

Surely this was enough to intoxicate any girl's heart, but Violet was one who remembered well. She never forgot the friend who had been so kind to her in her saddest and loneliest hour, any more than she forgot the mother and father who slept in the old church-yard, or good Otto Balche, who had taught her that which won this great success for her. And at night, when all the applause had faded into silence, when the lights that had shone upon her beauty were quenched, and the flowers that had been cast at her feet were slowly withering, Violet sat alone in her beautiful room, only the moonlight falling over her, and looking toward that quarter of the heavens under which lay the distant city where Arthur Hurst still dwelt, thought of her love for him and wept, and would have flung away all the meed of gold and fame that she had now, gladly and joyously, if in exchange had been given her the consciousness that that great love had been returned—the love that was growing a bitter load within her heart, as love long masked by pride must ever be to any woman.

Charles Moreland was very much in love with Violet. He had fluttered like a butterfly among many flowers, but this was, in very truth, the sweetest one to him. He longed to take it from the garden where all could see and praise, and transplant it in the shelter of home. The great empty rooms of Moreland House were waiting for a mistress. His heart had found one long ago, and there were no living relatives who had the right or the will to sneer at his espousal with a public singer. And Violet was a lady, every inch, and spotlessly pure as when, a slim, fair girl, she sang in the old church choir. She had no favored lover—that he saw. She did not hate him. He could please her and make her gay. She would never take costly gifts from him, but she did not refuse his flowers, his books, his attentions. She had told him a dozen times that she never intended to marry. What of that? She did not wish to abandon her profession as yet, perhaps. They were both young. He would wait. So he had followed her from town to town, for a year and more. She met no accepted lover in any of them. Now and then a little lame gentleman, grave of face and of manner, was in her company, and she seemed very kind to him—very friendly. Of course Charles was not jealous of *him*, especially as he was rather shabby, and evidently poor. Besides, he had been mean enough to listen to their conversation once, and it was very commonplace. *He* paid compliments in every sentence—any lover would.

A little trying Charles Moreland began to find it, but he was all the more determined to succeed—all the more in love. Besides, there would be a triumph in winning love from a heart that seemed a stranger to it—passion from a girl as calm as any piece of carved marble, as far as he could guess.

Little he knew of hours when she had paced the floor, wounding her soft palms with her taper nails, whispering to herself wild words of love and agony, and asking Heaven, in her bitterness, why the power was given her to win all hearts save the only one which seemed to her worth the winning? Her lover thought her cold. Red heat is all that some people wot of. They know it by its glow. But there is also white heat, and it is most potent.

In real life there is often little to write down from day to day. To Violet came her pleasant triumphs, to which she had grown used. Her frequent flatteries and her constant suitor's wooing, all indifferent commonplaces enough, though she would once scarcely have believed an angel who should have told her that this should be *her* life.

The "points" in her life were the evenings when, from the stage, she saw Arthur Hurst sitting in the seats below, and sang so gloriously that the critics grew wild in her praise next day. And the mornings which followed them, when a slow step came to her parlor door, and opening it, the dear eyes smiled upon her. And this for three long years—three years which were the heyday of her life, in which renown was given her, and wealth grew to be hers, and love was cast at her feet; yet which were imbittered in every hour, because the man she loved from her heart's core was nothing but a friend.

Do you know Bethelport, where, on the very sea verge a white town lies, the streets all planted with great trees, from the midst of which two taper spires arise? Beyond lie hills that grow purple in the sunset, and rosy white at dawn. They think no little of themselves at Bethelport. They have a Library and a Lyceum, and a hall where High Art is encouraged by the aristocracy of the place. Managers who produce Shakespeare are welcome, though the fairest burlesque troupe in the world would play to empty benches.

Here, one bright day, Violet Marten came to sing—her beauty at its height, her voice at its best, her poor heart at its sorest. She had of late made her letters tell a little of her tenderness to Arthur Hurst; at least, had not been cold or distant. She had not vailed her eyes when they last met, nor striven to disguise the love in them; and there was no change in him. As one suffering much pain gives way to irritation at last, so her long enduring heart took refuge in a certain sad anger. She walked on the beach in the early morning light, and thought bitterly. Suddenly a voice was at her ear.

"Miss Marten—Violet, I must speak to you."

She turned. Charles Moreland stood there. His face was flushed and troubled—half sad, half angry. He put his hand upon her arm.

"Violet," he said, "this is the last time. God knows I have been constant, but a man cannot bear too much. Three years have I followed you—three years striven to win you, by every means in my power. Again I come to you; again I offer you my heart, my hand, and all that is mine. If you refuse it I shall offer it no more. Pride has stooped long enough—Love has held sway beyond his time—and you—"

"The last chance, eh?" she said lightly. "Very kind of you to give it."

"You are cruel, Violet," he answered. "You sneer at such tender love as many women never have offered them in all their lives. My God! I can win hearts I care nothing for; why not this?"

It was the echo of her own secret cry. It touched her. She stood still, and tried to think.

It was true love that was offered her, and a good man, and a handsome man offered it; and all that made life sweet might be hers, but for a silly dream. "Shall I waste my heart any longer on a man who does not want it?" she said to herself. "I'll not be so weak." Then she glanced at Charles Moreland. He had turned away, but not so far but that she saw tears in his eyes. She went toward him.

"Charles," she said, her lip quivering, "I do not scorn your love. It honors me. If you really care for me so much, you may have me."

Then his arms were about her, and he was glad; and she strove to be.

They walked on the beach for a long while. From it they walked to the clergyman's house. He seemed to fear that she should change her mind, and he wished to put it out of her power to do so.

They were married that morning, the clergyman's wife and daughter smiling witnesses of the ceremony. And that day he promised to let her go back alone to her hotel, and to sing as she had agreed to do that night. The next morning the news would be abroad, and he would claim her.

"And I will not see you, or speak to you again until to-morrow, Charles," she said. "Then this life ends, and my new one begins."

So they parted.

She put her wedding ring upon her watch chain, and so wore it—not upon her finger. As she stepped forth upon the stage that night, the thought that this would be the last time gave her neither joy nor sorrow; but as she advanced, she saw a face among the faces of the audience that made the ring lying over her heart turn hard and cold there, to her fancy. Arthur Hurst looked up at her, and smiled—a glad, free smile, unusual to him. She smiled back, but she could have screamed. She sang, but not well; she made mistakes, and faltered. Between the first part of the concert and the last she turned faint; but the final song aroused her. It was love's last adieu to the beloved. It was, as she felt, her adieu to Arthur—a German song, rich with German romance and ardor. It thrilled her heart as her voice thrilled the crowd of listeners. One felt the tears standing in his eyes. She could not see them; her own had blinded her.

She went home to her hotel. The youth of the place made that old-time demonstration, of taking the horses from her carriage, and dragging it to its destination. They called her out into the balcony to receive their applause, and she smiled and bowed. Then she sat down upon a sofa in the pretty flower-bedecked parlor, and took her wedding ring from its chain and put it on.

"I am the wife of a true man," she said, "and I will be a true wife even in thought, God helping me."

Just then a tap came at the door. It was a servant, who uttered these words:

"A gentleman, Miss. He says it's late, but just a moment."

Violet arose. One gentleman had a right to summon her at any moment now. She had forbidden him; but she would see him for a little, it might be best for her. She went down to the parlor. Arthur Hurst arose to meet her. He led her to a seat. For the second time in his life he drew near to her, and took her hand in his. His great black eyes were dewy, his mouth sweetly tremulous, his voice not his usual voice.

He put her hand to his lips, to his cheek. She felt his heart beating against her arm. Then he kissed her. She sat as one in a dream.

"Violet," he said, "I wonder whether my hopes mislead me. I have loved you so long! You know that, do you not? and you—you don't shrink from me."

"It has been so long, so hopeless," he continued. "I have held my peace for three years, and struggled with fortune the while. And it has come at last—the success I have striven for. With all my other short-comings, I could not ask you to share a fate so beggarly as mine seemed likely to be. But it is past now. I shall be a rich man in a year or two. Violet, my darling Violet, will you be my wife?"

The ring lay cold as ice upon her finger—the wedding ring of Charles Moreland.

An hour after this, a woman slipped into the chemist's shop of Bethelport, and asked for arsenic. The chemist answered doubtfully; he hardly knew about selling it. It might be used for a bad purpose. When a doctor ordered it he sent a prescription.

The lady put back her filmy hood.

"I am Miss Marten," she said. "You heard me sing to-night. We professional people must keep up our complexions."

Then she smiled, and the chemist smiled also, and thought to himself that this accounted for that transparent skin, and thought no more of it until next morning, when Miss Violet Marten was found dead. She left two little notes behind her—one to Arthur Hurst, the other to her husband. No one but those to whom they were addressed knew what they contained.

At the inquest the chemist gave his evidence, and the papers had a paragraph concerning the beautiful cantatrice who died for the sake of a fair complexion, and moralized on the folly of beauty feeding itself on arsenic, and so being liable to take overdoses. And they will show you the grave at Bethelport church-yard where lies the singer, beautiful, young and successful, and married that morning to a millionaire, who killed herself through excess of vanity, but by pure accident, since she had everything to live for. And there is a stone there which is a marvel of carved beauty, that her husband had placed over her; but the strange, slow-growing vine that is creeping over it, was planted by a gentleman whom no one knew—a lame gentleman, with a very sad, pale face.

Doubtless Violet left sore hearts in this world when she went out of it, but whether they healed or were broken we will not seek to know. Our story was Violet's, and with her life it ends.

WIT AND HUMOR.

Girls should be warned of the risk they run in marrying railroad brakemen. An enthusiastic member of that fraternity, on being awakened the other night from a dream of an impending crash by a cry of pain, found himself sitting up in bed holding his wife by the ears, having nearly twisted her head off in his frantic attempts to "down brakes."

"Would you take the last cent a feller has for a glass of soda water?" asked a ragged newsboy of the keeper of a street fountain. "Yes, I would," said the hard-hearted and unthinking vender of the cooling beverage; whereupon the newsboy pulled out the cent, and got the soda.

"Now, John, suppose there's a load of hay on one side of a river, and a jackass on the other side, and no bridge, and the river's too wide to swim, how can the jackass get to the hay?" "I give it up." "Well, that's just what the other jackass did."

"Women," exclaimed an enthusiastic advocate of the "rights" of the sex to commissions in the navy, "have always occupied positions of responsibility in the navy. Yes, from the earliest times, for wasn't Lot's wife an old salt?"

A dwarf said to an encroaching giant, "See here! we've equal rights in this country!" "That may be," replied the giant, "but you can't walk in my shoes." "That's nothing; you can't begin to walk in mine," retorted the dwarf.

"What's to become of *me*, if you die?" asked an affectionate wife of her receding husband. "I don't know," he snapped out querulously. "It would look better in you to be thinking about what's to become of *me!*"

"My dear Mrs. Miffkins, your darling Emma is a perfect seraph. She has your eyes and her father's hair." "Now I see," said the darling Emma, "it's because I've got pa's hair that he has to wear a wig."

The way they itemize the military beaux encamped near Hartford: "Private —— sports the 'rubiest' nose in the encampment. Captain —— can't hold a candle to it. It looks like a morning glory."

A Minnesota man having been carried forty feet by lightning, and set down uninjured, the inventors of the country are encouraged to hope that electricity may be utilized for big bundles yet.

"How does that look, eh?" said a big-fisted Wall street man to a friend, holding up one of his brawny hands. "That," said the friend, "looks as though you'd gone short on soap."

A blacksmith in a Pennsylvania village gives notice that "no horses will be shod here on Sunday, except sickness and death."

A tender-hearted omnibus driver on the Fifth Avenue line says he hates to run over a person: he thinks it hurts the springs.

"Have you heard my last speech?" asked a political haranguer of a wit. "I sincerely hope so," was the reply.

It is now pretty generally agreed among historians that the first bores on record were the Roman augurs.

An old wine-bibber says that an empty champagne bottle is like an orphan, because it has lost its pop.

Can a man who has been fined by the magistrates over and over again be considered a refined man?

"Has Doctor —— much practice now?" "O yes; I assisted in laying out three of his patients last week."

An umbrella deserves no credit for its services, for it never does any good until it is "put up" to it.

"Man is a *mystery*," said a young lady to her beau. "Yes, dear," said he, "and a girl is a *miss*-ery."

Why is a grain of sand in the eye like a schoolmaster's whip? Because it hurts the pupil.

A dumb man lately went to law with a deaf man. Of course the latter was the deaf-endant.

A drunkard is like a bad account, because he generally overbalances.

Why is a screw in tight like a screw in loose? Because it is in-secure.

In Pennsylvania they call half-mourning "Pittsburgh sunshine."

It is a bad sign to be skillful in apologies.

CURRENT ITEMS.

A Worcester lady, while riding to Boston one day last week, was annoyed by the officious politeness of a man who occupied the car seat with her. At his departure, which she hurried by her evident suspicion, she found that he had picked her pocket of her portmonaie. In her search for the missing article, she discovered that while performing his theft, he had slipped a diamond, leaving it attached to the lining of her dress. Jewelers of Boston offer $250 for the ring, and the lady is just ten times the richer from her adventure.

A young American lady who had been for some time living with her parents in Zurich, Switzerland, and had, contrary to their wishes, been receiving the addresses of a young Pole, was forbidden, some time since, to see him any more. Upon this the lovers attempted mutual suicide, but the Pole was arrested just after the young lady was killed, and as he was about to place the revolver to his own head.

A house in Taunton was struck by lightning on Thursday of last week, and considerably damaged, while the furniture, crockery and clothing were mostly destroyed. The lady of the house was thrown down and badly cut about the face. Another lady, on a visit at the house, was also thrown down and partially paralyzed, but has since recovered.

As a four-horse wagon load of powder was passing by the Maine Central freight depot in Portland, the other day, a keg filled with powder fell over and broke in pieces in the gravelled street. The way smokers hastened from that vicinity was an exhilarating sight to look upon, if one could have forgotten the powder.

The most extraordinary instance of patience on record is that of an American judge, who listened silently for two days while a couple of wordy lawyers contended about the construction of an act of the Legislature, and then ended the controversy by quietly remarking, "Gentlemen, the law is repealed."

The other day, three ruffians from New York refused to pay their fare on the Hartford railroad, and on arriving at Hartford, two stalwart policemen were called in to eject them. The ruffians showed fight, and the policeman beat them till they whined, paid their fare, and went on their way peaceably.

A piece of bituminous coal lying on some dry pine boards against the side of a building in Milport, N. Y., spontaneously burst into flames on one of the recent hot days. It had been exposed to the rays of the sun nearly all day, the thermometer ranging from 100 to 105 degrees in the shade.

A Newark family attempted to punish a four-year-old daughter by holding her mouth to the spout of a tea-kettle filled with boiling water. The steam rushed into the child's mouth, scalding it so severely as to threaten fatal consequences.

A citizen of North Middleboro' attempted to commit suicide the other day with arsenic; but he took such a large dose that he overdid the matter, and came out alive, after suffering agony enough to cure him of his suicidal propensities.

Two little girls were rescued from the flames of a kerosene lamp conflagration in the room where they were sleeping, at Springfield, the other evening, after the flames had thoroughly enveloped the bed. Such narrow escapes are rare.

On Thursday of last week two boys in Wallingford, Conn., went under a tree during a thunder shower, and were killed by lightning. Their parents saw the accident from the house, and went out to find both of their children dead.

A young burglar, twelve years old, was found hidden in an ice chest, in a Bath, Me., business office the other day. He was intending to rob the store, and was sent to the State Reform School.

A Bangor man interfered in a quarrel near a steamboat wharf, the other evening, and got half of his under-lip bitten out for his pains. He don't believe in peace-making any more.

California reports the largest wheat crop this year that she has ever harvested. It is expected that the profits on it will reach near a hundred millions of dollars.

A bather at Newport recently lost $1,500 and his gold watch, which were taken from his clothes in the bathing-house while he was disporting himself in the surf.

One of the most distinguished engravers in Paris, named Henry Trappes, lately shot himself through the heart, because life had become intolerably wearisome to him.

IN THE NEST.

BY MRS. M. A. KIDDER.

Gather them close to your loving heart—
Cradle them on your breast;
They will soon enough leave your brooding care—
Soon enough mount youth's topmost stair—
Little ones in the nest.

Fret *not* that the children's hearts are gay,
That the restless feet *will* run;
There may come a time, in the by and by,
When you'll sit in your lonely room and sigh
For a sound of childish fun;

When you'll long for the repetition sweet
That sounded through each room,
Of "mother," "mother," the dear love calls
That will echo long in the silent halls,
And add to their stately gloom.

There may come a time when you'll long to hear
The eager boyish tread,
The tuneless whistle, the clear shrill shout,
The busy bustling in and out,
And the pattering overhead.

When the boys and girls are all grown up,
And scattered far and wide,
Or gone to that beautiful golden shore
Where sickness and death come never more,
You will miss them from your side.

Then gather them close to your loving heart—
Cradle them on your breast;
They will soon enough leave your brooding care—
Soon enough mount youth's topmost stair—
Little ones in the nest.

A BONE of CONTENTION;

—OR—

The Waldemar Succession.

By MRS. HARRIET LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE HAMPTON MYSTERY," "THE BAILIFF'S SCHEME," "THE LADY OF KILDARE," "THE OLD LIFE'S SHADOWS," "A DARING GAME," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BADNESS AND BOLDNESS.

Lord Waldemar proceeded from Lady Thaxter's residence to his own, which was not far distant, both being in Park Lane, in a strangely thoughtful mood. His hall porter removed his lordship's greatcoat, and took possession also of his walking-stick, hat and gloves, and the Baron went into his drawing-room.

Miss Floyd, in a Parisian dress and glittering with jewelry, was seated near one of the windows, idly turning over the pages of a fashion journal. Mrs. Watchley was cozily placed near the fire, and was busy with the construction of a very gay bouquet upon canvas with Berlin wools.

"Come in, grandpapa," cried Miss Floyd, with some excitement and eagerness. "It's horridly dull here. Have you called upon the Marchioness of Roxburghe? Will she come to see me to-day?"

"The Marchioness is ill, Hilda," replied his lordship, with a singular sense of repulsion as he looked upon the fair, deceitful face of his acknowledged granddaughter and remembered the pure, frank and truthful countenance of Honor Glint, which haunted him like the memory of his dead son. "She has a serious attack of rheumatism, and must go to Nice for her health as soon as she can bear the journey. She cannot introduce you this season."

Miss Floyd uttered an exclamation of impatience, annoyance and anger.

"It is too bad!" she exclaimed, with tears of vexation. "The horrid old thing! Her illness seems very convenient, especially as you desired me not to enter society this winter. I dare say it's all a contrived plan between you two to frustrate my wishes."

"*Hilda!*"

Lord Waldemar's stern voice rang through the room, and his stern face grew sterner still in its haughty anger and surprise.

"Hilda!" cried Mrs. Watchley, trembling with terror. "Oh, don't, my dear! You must not speak in that way to his lordship. Don't let your temper make you insolent to your dear grandpapa."

Miss Floyd, among all her lessons and amid all the careful training and tutelage she had received, had never learned to control her temper when smarting under a sense of disappointment. She feared Lord Waldemar, whose rebuke of her insolence had startled her, and she turned upon her companion, saying harshly:

"You forget your place, Mrs. Watchley. Do you dare tell me what I should do? If it were not for grandpapa, I should discharge you, or at least compel you to take your place among the upper servants. As it is, you will be more guarded in addressing me, or you will find that your situation is precarious."

Mrs. Watchley, in an agony of fear lest this betrayal of Miss Floyd's character should disgust the Baron, vainly tried to check the young lady. Failing so utterly, she burst into tears.

Lord Waldemar, well as he had read Miss Floyd, was astonished at this scene. An angry lightning leaped from his amazed eyes, and there came upon his stern, bronzed face an expression before which even Hilda Floyd quailed.

"Hilda!" he exclaimed. "I am astonished. I knew you were deceitful and time-serving, but I did not believe you so utterly cruel and heartless. Mrs. Watchley, whom you have treated as a disobedient servant, is a lady born and bred. She took you from your mother's dying arms into her own. When you had no relative in all the world to defend and protect you, for I did not know of your existence, she cherished and nurtured and loved you. She educated you as a lady. I only fear that in her idolatry of you she has spoiled you. And it is thus you repay her? I blush for you. Know, Miss Floyd, that Mrs. Watchley is not your servant, but your companion, and that you cannot discharge her nor send her away. I desire to arouse in your heart some spark of affection for and gratitude to her. I expect you to apologize to her."

"I'll never do that!" cried Miss Floyd, flinging back her head. "Mrs. Watchley has been used to just such treatment from me all my life, and I'll never humble myself to apologize to her. As to her goodness to me, haven't you paid her for it? She has had principal and interest for every penny she ever expended upon me. I never cared for her affection. She's too far beneath me to cause her affection to be of any value to me. She gave me a home, but she has got a better one. I don't fancy that her kindness to me was by any means so disinterested as you seem to think, grandpapa. She seems to have made it pay pretty well."

Lord Waldemar's face flushed.

"Hilda!" he exclaimed, "I am ashamed of you! If you will not apologize for yourself, I will apologize for you. Mrs. Watchley, you know this wayward girl far better than I do, and you have perhaps learned to bear with her. I beg you to overlook her conduct on this occasion. I am persuaded that she does not mean all she says."

The young lady's lip curled. In her unreasoning state of anger, she lost sight of prudence and self-interest even.

"I do mean what I say," she said, frowning. "Permit me to utter my real sentiments, and let me have the credit of them, grandpapa. I don't care how soon you know it. I don't like Mrs. Watchley, and I won't have her spying on me, and saying 'Don't, dear,' eternally. I'm sick of her, and if I ever get into power I'll give her just one hour in which to get out of my house—"

"Oh, Hilda, Hilda!" cried Mrs. Watchley, in an increasing and unbearable agony. "I implore you to say no more. You are injuring yourself. Control your tongue, I beseech you. I would rather go away than to hear you talk like this."

Lord Waldemar had entertained the opinion that his acknowledged granddaughter was well bred. That belief was now seen to be a mere fallacy, for Miss Floyd turned her back abruptly upon her pleading companion, and thrumming her own dainty fingers upon a Venetian mosaic table, began to hum in the most insolent manner a bar from a popular opera.

Lord Waldemar was silent and motionless for one moment from sheer amazement. Then he rose up, towering far above Miss Floyd, and raining down upon her the angry lightnings of his eyes.

"This is the first low-bred and vulgar-souled Floyd I ever looked upon," he said slowly. "I begin to think, Mrs. Watchley, that it is a serious pity that you did not suffer this descendant of the Arlyns to die in her childhood. Strange that all your years of care should have resulted in the shaping of a creature like this."

With a sneering smile at the young lady, he turned and left the room.

"O Hilda!" burst forth Mrs. Watchley, when she found herself alone with her charge. "Why will you not control your temper? You ought to have been gentle and affectionate to Lord Waldemar, and have won his love. I fear you have ruined yourself—"

"Do stop!" frowned Miss Floyd. "It's croak, croak continually. You ought not to provoke me as you do. If I am ruined, it's all your fault. But I'm not ruined. Grandpapa can't set me adrift as he did papa, because I'm a girl, and have no one else to take care of me. He can't alter the fact that I must inevitably succeed him. I do hope he won't keep me waiting very long. He's sixty-eight years old now, and he ought not to live many years longer, although he is so hale and vigorous that I sometimes fear he'll live to be a hundred. When he dies, and I become my own mistress, then, ah, then I shall be happy! In the mean time, whether he likes me or not, he'll have to provide for me as his heiress. I like his money, although I hate him."

Lord Waldemar had hurried along the hall toward his private room, but remembering that he had not mentioned Lady Thaxter to Miss Floyd, had smothered his anger, and turned back to repair the omission. It happened that as he paused at the drawing-room door, his hand upon the latch, Miss Floyd was beginning her reply to Mrs. Watchley. Spellbound, he had listened to the entire speech. When she had finished, he moved away and hurried to his library.

"And that serpent is the daughter of my son Wallace, as frank and true a boy as ever lived!" he said, in his bitterness. "And she must succeed me in the Waldemar title and estates? Why, she is worse even than Darrel Moer. I have made a poor exchange. She is all Arlyn. Oh, why could I not have found a granddaughter like this young Honor Glint, with her brilliant black eyes, so like my son's, and her sunny face? She has soul. How her gaze seemed to go to my very heart. If I had seen the two girls together, and been asked to choose my granddaughter between them, I should have chosen Miss Glint. Her resemblance to Wallace is something marvelous. She looks like my boy, only refined, made delicate, and spiritualized. The resemblance is inexplicable. It seems as if it must be more than a mere coincidence. If Miss Glint were not the known daughter of a Lancashire gentleman—if there were any possibility that Grimrod could have made a mistake— Ah! what nonsense! Grimrod sifted every iota of the evidence, and here is the child's nurse, Mrs. Watchley herself, to give weight to the testimony. But what might have been!"

He remained in his library until time to dress for dinner—a custom to which he had scrupulously adhered all his life, and which he never omitted except in illness. At seven o'clock he came down to the dining-room.

Miss Floyd was already in the room, and alone. She was standing before the fire, but came forward at his lordship's entrance and made a very prettily worded apology for her rudeness of some hours previous. The Baron inclined his head, accepting the apology, but when she would have bestowed a Judas kiss upon him, he upraised his noble face beyond her reach and declined the proffered caress.

"Don't trouble yourself in that line, Hilda," he said coldly. "I'm not fond of kisses. We will confine our intercourse to the 'yea, yea' and 'nay, nay' description."

"Just as you please, grandpapa," said the young hypocrite, with a mournful voice. "You are all I have in the world to love, and if you repulse me I've no one to turn to. I know I'm willful and cross and full of tempers, but I'll try to be better. My heart is all right, grandpapa. If you would only be patient with me, as dear Mrs. Watchley is."

"I dare say," said Lord Waldemar dryly, and rather irrelevantly. "But I'm not a patient man, Hilda. I have an old-fashioned weakness for honor, truth, sincerity and goodness. I like a woman to be pure and sweet and kindly all through, not merely on the surface."

"I suppose grandmamma was an angel," remarked Miss Floyd, a little spitefully.

The old lord bent his head reverently at the utterance of that name, and his proud lips quivered under his frost-white mustache. In all the years that had come and gone since he had laid his young wife in her tomb, he had cherished her memory as something sacred and holy. Even though he had said to himself that he should like to marry the Hungarian Countess of Rothsmere, the memory of his dead wife, who had died young and would always be young to him, had not been dethroned. Even should he take another wife to cheer his latter days and to soothe his loneliness, the mother of his dead boy would never be forgotten. Since her death until this day, he had never even dreamed of a second marriage as possible.

"You are right, Hilda," he said. "My dear wife was an angel. She had all those old-fashioned virtues I have mentioned. But, Hilda, I would rather not hear her name on your lips."

The angry answer that sprang to Miss Floyd's tongue was arrested by the appearance of Mrs. Watchley.

The butler and his staff also appeared. The Baron seated his granddaughter's companion at the table with habitual courtesy, and took his place. Miss Floyd also seated herself, and the stately dinner, more formal here than at Floyd Manor, progressed slowly.

After the meal the ladies went up to the drawing-room, Lord Waldemar lingering alone over his wine.

His lordship came up presently, but he did not seat himself.

"I am going out," he said, standing before the fire. "I must visit Westminster this evening. Before I go, it is proper for me to tell you, Hilda, my decision in regard to your future. You are not to enter general society this winter. Any young lady who could display such innate vulgarity, ill-temper, and low-breeding, as you have exhibited to-day, would only disgrace her unfortunate relatives. My late wife's kinswoman, Lady Thaxter, will, however, call upon you to-morrow, and will escort you to flower shows, the zoological garden, Sydenham and elsewhere, and will kindly introduce you to a pleasant circle of young people. You shall have a full corps of masters in all the accomplishments. I cannot take time to engage them for you, and Mrs. Watchley cannot take the trouble. I shall have Grimrod attend to it. Lady Thaxter will invite us to dine with her *en famille*, some day within a week. She has some delightful guests, whose manners you will do well to imitate."

"And so I am to be a mere school-girl?" pouted Miss Floyd.

"We will not discuss the matter, Hilda. My decision is irrevocable; therefore make the best of it. You will receive Lady Thaxter with all honor. She is my best friend, and was very fond of my poor wife. Another year will be soon enough for you to launch yourself upon society, Hilda."

His lordship, without waiting to argue the question, departed from the room, and soon after from the house.

The next morning, Lady Thaxter, in elegant carriage costume, and alone, called upon Miss Floyd. Lord Waldemar was present, introducing his acknowledged granddaughter to his late wife's kinswoman, who was also his treasured and honored friend.

"I am your cousin, my dear," said Lady Thaxter, delighting in the pearly complexion and unmistakable prettiness of Miss Floyd, yet wishing that the young girl were endowed with a positive beauty like that of Honor Glint—"that is, a cousin a second time removed, you know. I am your relation on your grandmamma's side, as Lord Waldemar may have explained to you. I cannot trace in your face any resemblance to the Floyd family, nor to that of your grandmother," she added wistfully. "Resemblances are capricious things, it seems. I have a young friend who is staying with me who is an ideal copy of your father, as I knew him in his boyish days."

Mrs. Watchley started. Lord Waldemar's attention was called to her by her sudden agitation, and he hastened to present Mrs. Watchley to Lady Thaxter, uttering a neat and effective little speech, in which he did full justice to all the imaginary qualities with which he had endowed his granddaughter's companion.

"Does Miss Floyd resemble her mother, Mrs. Watchley?" inquired Lady Thaxter, after a little, when the conversation which herself had inaugurated began to flag.

"Yes, my lady—that is, no, my lady," said Mrs. Watchley confusedly, apparently having been taken off her guard. "She looks to me very much like her papa. Mr. Floyd was very fair, and his hair was light."

"But his hair had a tint of pale gold, and his eyes were black," replied Lady Thaxter. "His looks come back to me with startling vividness since my young friend came to me. *She* might have been Wallace Floyd's daughter, and one would have declared that her paternity was stamped upon her face."

Mrs. Watchley's countenance was of a sickly pallor at this moment. She held up a small hand screen before her, hiding it.

"I must venture to express an opinion different from Mrs. Watchley's," said the Baron. "Seeing so little of the looks and nature of the Floyd in Hilda, I am compelled to think her all Arlyn."

An unmistakable scowl appeared on Miss Floyd's face.

Lady Thaxter set her down in her own mind as unamiable, but redoubled her kindness to her, under the impression that the girl was extremely sensitive, and felt wounded by her grandfather's unflattering tone.

"I have some friends visiting me, Miss Floyd," she said—"a Hungarian Countess, who is very beautiful and fascinating; a young lady of your own age, Miss Honor Glint, whom you are sure to like, from her singular resemblance to your own father; and finally my nephew, Sir Hugh Tregaron, who is greatly attached to Lord Waldemar, and whom his lordship highly esteems. You are young to enter society, but you can at least make the acquaintance of some young people whom I shall be at pains to introduce to you. We are kinswomen, my dear, and should be friends. We will not let ceremony and formality stand between us. I desire you to look upon me as your intimate and dear friend. And all this is a preamble to an invitation to you, Hilda, to dine with me to-morrow informally. It is merely a family dinner, but I beg you, my lord, and you also, Mrs. Watchley, to lend us your presence. There will be no one else present except my permanent guests."

Lord Waldemar, Hilda and Mrs. Watchley accepted the invitation.

"I have dropped in too often uninvited at your charming family dinners to stand upon ceremony with you, Lady Thaxter," said the Baron, smiling. "Your house is a second home to me always. I am sure Hilda will also feel at home there."

Lady Thaxter made a long call, and Lord Waldemar conducted her to her carriage.

"And that is Wallace Floyd's daughter!" murmured her ladyship, as she drove away. "I would never have suspected the fact. She's not at all like Wallace. The Baron must be right. She's all Arlyn. And somehow I don't like her. She gives me the impression of being false, deceitful, and even wicked. I am glad Darrel Moer is not in town. I could not have invited him to my house with Hugh and Honor there."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LADY THAXTER'S DINNER.

Upon the evening of the day subsequent to that in which Lady Thaxter's visit to Hilda Floyd had occurred, Honor Glint and Sir Hugh Tregaron, with their genial hostess, were gathered in Lady Thaxter's drawing-room, awaiting the arrival of their expected guests.

They were all in full dress, although the occasion was only what Lady Thaxter had termed "simply a family dinner." The hostess appeared to advantage in a heavy and long black silk gown, ruffled and profusely trimmed with black and white lace. Her ornaments were exquisitely carved sardonyx cameos.

Honor wore a pale green silk, heavy and lustrous, which contrasted with the purity of her complexion, and the yellow gold of her hair. Her only ornaments were a pair of pale emeralds, simply set, and one being worn attached to each tiny shell-like ear. Her black eyes were as brilliant as stars, and her witching beauty was as vivid and piquant as if she had never known the shadow of a trouble. Sir Hugh's grave eyes dwelt upon her loveliness with an intense love and admiration, which he vainly tried to conceal.

"I hope the Countess will feel able to join us at dinner," said Lady Thaxter anxiously. "She has not been well for a day or two. The change of climate has, I think, not been beneficial to her. As to Mrs. Early, she will hardly be back to-day from Tooting, where she has been for a couple of days past. Ah," she added, with a breath of relief, "here is the Countess now."

The tapping of little boot heels was heard upon the marble floor of the hall, the drawing-room door opened, and the Hungarian Countess made her appearance.

She was a little pale, but was looking superbly. Her gray hair was arranged in graceful, airy waves that rose lightly above her pure, broad forehead. There was a restless glitter in her radiant blue eyes, but her lovely face was more than ever youthful and charming. She was dressed in a robe of pale violet velvet, with square-cut corsage, her bare and milk-white neck being partially shaded with standing frills of rare point lace. She wore a rivière of diamonds around her neck, and a superb locket, set with an immense liquid brilliant, glowed and sparkled and coruscated upon her bosom. There were diamonds pendent from her ears and clasped about her arms, and even studding the clasp of her belt.

Lady Thaxter arose at the entrance of her honored guest, and the two ladies took their seats near together.

The hostess inquired affectionately in regard to the health of the Countess, indulged in some remarks highly condemnatory of the English climate, and finally said:

"I believe I did not tell you, Lady Rothsmere, that Lord Waldemar will be accompanied here to-day by his young granddaughter, Miss Floyd, whom I saw yesterday at his house."

The Hungarian Countess bent forward, eager and intent, a strangely startled look in her blue eyes.

"You did not mention, Lady Thaxter," she said, in a tremulous voice, "that you called at Lord Waldemar's house yesterday. Ah, I remember you made some other calls, and there was our drive in the park and visitors in the evening. And then to-day I have been confined to my room with headache. We have had no time, in fact, to discuss Lord Waldemar and his family."

The Countess spoke with a haste that might be termed feverish.

"As you say, Lady Rothsmere," said her hostess, observing nothing remarkable in the manner of her guest, "we have had no time to discuss the Waldemar family. Miss Floyd, whose history is singularly romantic, is coming here with her grandfather to-day—"

"Coming here!" breathed the Hungarian Countess, in a panting voice.

"Yes; I am her kinswoman, you know. Lord Waldemar has always been much at home in my house, and I have spent months at Floyd Manor, and at Waldemar. I expect that Miss Floyd will spend much time here."

Lady Rothsmere's fingers fluttered over the carved pearl sticks of her violet silk fan in a nervous fashion.

"You saw this young lady, my friend?" she said, trying to speak calmly. "Does she resemble her noble grandfather?"

"Not at all, Countess," replied Lady Thaxter, in a tone of disappointment. "She is fair, and so is he, but her hair is a fawn color—"

"Golden?" interposed the Hungarian Countess involuntarily, with a glance at the shimmering head of Honor Glint.

"Like Honor's? No; it is, as I said, a pale fawn color, not rare, not beautiful, although it was glossy and well kept. She is not quite so slender as Honor, but she is certainly very pretty. Her eyes are not like the Floyd eyes, but are blue."

"Blue!" again exclaimed the Hungarian Countess, with another glance at Honor Glint's softly vivid eyes of tender dusk. "Oh, no, Lady Thaxter, they are black."

Lady Thaxter smiled, her glance following that of the Countess.

"You fancy that Miss Floyd resembles her grandfather," she said, "or that she looks like Honor. But, Countess, Miss Glint's conjunction of dark eyes and golden hair is rare in England as elsewhere. You will not meet many young ladies of that peculiar type anywhere. Miss Floyd is simply an ordinarily pretty and well-mannered young lady."

The Countess flushed a little, and presently she asked, in low, fluttering tones:

"Will his lordship's nephew, Mr. Darrel Moer, accompany the Baron and his granddaughter here to-day, Lady Thaxter?"

Only Sir Hugh Tregaron noticed the suppressed eagerness of the Countess; the breathless suspense in which she waited for an answer; the fluttering of color in and out of her cheeks. His suspicions of Lady Rothsmere's relations to Darrel Moer found confirmation in her hidden agitation at the very thought of seeing him.

"No," said Lady Thaxter placidly, unconscious of all this by-play. "Mr. Moer is in Lancashire."

Honor Glint turned pale with a sudden fear. She well knew that Darrel Moer's presence in Lancashire concerned herself. Sir Hugh endeavored to reassure her by a look.

"We can all guess why Darrel Moer is in that part of the country," continued Lady Thaxter, also looking at Honor. "But his designs, happily, will all be frustrated. While he is searching in that quarter, Honor is safe and cherished here. But if he were in London, I could not invite him to my house. He has been accustomed to come in frequently, the families being intimate, but I can never receive him here again."

The countenance of Lady Rothsmere changed. Sir Hugh could not tell whether she was glad or sorry that she was not likely to meet Darrel Moer. He would have given much to be able to read her heart at that moment.

"There is a third guest invited here to-day," remarked Lady Thaxter. "She is Miss Floyd's companion and friend, and has been a mother to her all her life. She was Miss Floyd's nurse in her infancy, and received the little child as a precious charge from the dying mother's arms. She is the most devoted of attendants."

The Countess looked surprised and singularly disturbed.

"Do people of rank invite persons of the lower classes to dine with them?" she inquired. "Pardon me, dear Lady Thaxter, but I am surprised that you invite a child's hired nurse to dine with you."

Lady Thaxter colored at the implied reflection, and hastened to say:

"But this woman is not a menial, not an ordinary nurse, Countess. She is a lady by birth and breeding. She was the daughter, and is the widow, of a curate. She is plainly a lady, and Lord Waldemar has chosen to constitute her the companion of his granddaughter. She had fallen upon evil days when Mrs. Wallace Floyd took her into her service, more as a companion and friend than as a hired attendant. She was devoted to Mrs. Floyd, and reveres her memory."

The Hungarian Countess looked amazed.

"What is this person's name?" she inquired.

"Mrs. Watchley. That must be the Waldemar carriage now," said Lady Thaxter. "Our guests have arrived."

Lady Thaxter excused herself and went out into the hall to receive her guests, and to conduct Miss Floyd and Mrs. Watchley to a dressing-room. Lord Waldemar went into the drawing-room, and presently the hostess came in, followed by her guests.

Lady Thaxter presented Hilda Floyd to the Hungarian Countess, who stood up, white and trembling, with a look of actual horror in her blue eyes.

She might have been looking upon the Gorgon's head, rather than upon a pretty young English girl, if one were to judge from the frozen stare upon her beautiful face.

Even Lady Thaxter noticed her friend's strange manner, and was astonished at it.

Lady Rothsmere crushed down the agitation that threatened to overwhelm her, and with a gentle dignity, full of sweetness, bowed low to Miss Floyd. But she did not follow the English custom and hold out her hand.

As the custom is falling into disuse among newly introduced persons and mere acquaintances, and as Lady Rothsmere was a foreigner, the omission, of course, was unnoticed.

The hostess presented Mrs. Watchley to the Hungarian Countess, who regarded her keenly and sharply, yet graciously entered into conversation with her.

Lady Thaxter convoyed Miss Floyd to the little group composed of Lord Waldemar, Honor Glint, and Sir Hugh Tregaron, and the young people were made acquainted.

"I have been listening to the romantic story of Miss Floyd, Mrs. Watchley," said Lady Rothsmere, making room for Hilda Floyd's companion beside her upon the sofa. "Lady Thaxter does not thoroughly understand the story, I believe. She assured me that you had been with Miss Floyd from the hour of her mother's death, and that you received the child from her dying mother's arms. I am greatly interested in a story so deliciously romantic, and I trust I am not intrusive in speaking on the subject?"

"Not at all, my lady, not at all," said Mrs. Watchley, delighted at being questioned by a real Countess, and anxious to promote an intimacy with a lady of such superb and distinguished presence. "You were correctly informed by Lady Thaxter, but she did not tell you all. I have watched over Hilda from her birth, and I love her as if she were my own child."

"I dare say, madame," said the Countess softly, yet with a perplexed look in her blue eyes. "Were you acquainted with Mrs. Wallace Floyd, Lord Waldemar's poor young daughter-in-law, who died at Trieste?"

"Oh, yes, my lady. I was her friend and confidant," sighed Mrs. Watchley. "I was with her through her illness, and she gave the child at last into my care, enjoining me to bring it up tenderly, to educate it, and to finally instate her in her rightful position as Lord Waldemar's heiress. At the old lord's death, she will be a peeress in her own right."

"Yes," assented Lady Rothsmere slowly, and with an inscrutable look in her eyes.

Lord Waldemar approached the Countess, and addressed himself to her with such *empressément* that Mrs. Watchley arose and approached the youthful group. Miss Floyd introduced her companion to Miss Glint, and the conversation flowed on.

The dinner was announced at eight o'clock, and the company transported themselves to the dining-room. The "simple family dinner" proved itself a triumph of the French cook who presided over Lady Thaxter's *cuisine*, and was in every way faultless. The wines recommended themselves to a connoisseur like Lord Waldemar, and there were odorless flowers in the tall silver épergne, and hot-house fruits in profusion. The lights gleamed softly with mellow radiance through their misty globes, and the firelight in the grates was glad, ruddy and genial.

They lingered over the dessert, but the gentlemen returned with the ladies to the drawing-room. Lord Waldemar would not go to Westminster that evening, the reading of the bill in which he was interested having been deferred twenty-four hours, and he devoted himself to the lovely Hungarian Countess, with an odd fluttering of his stern old heart. Despite his fidelity to the memory of the dead wife who would always be young to him—despite the fact that he could never love again with the youthful ardor he had given her—despite the fact that the sacred memory of the lost one was more to him, and would always be more to him than the love of any living woman—yet his stern eyes softened with a strange tenderness as they rested upon the young widow's beautiful face, or as he met the glances of her radiant eyes.

"'There is no fool like an old fool,'" he said to himself a dozen times that evening.

Lady Rothsmere improved an opportunity afforded by a temporary diversion of her elderly admirer in Honor Glint's direction, to approach Miss Floyd, who was at the moment engaged in turning over the leaves of a volume of engravings.

"You are nearly or quite as great a stranger in England as I am, Miss Floyd," said the Countess, with a genial smile. "Have you seen Lady Thaxter's conservatory yet? No? Let me show you the way to it. It is a perfect bower of fragrance and beauty, and most young ladies are fond of flowers."

Flattered, as Mrs. Watchley had been, by the attentions of the distinguished Countess, Hilda replied that she adored flowers, and especially desired to see Lady Thaxter's conservatory. Lady Rothsmere conducted her through the inner drawing-room, and into the boudoir in which her memorable interview with Sir Hugh Tregaron had transpired.

One side of this room was formed of plate-glass sliding doors, behind which was a very wilderness of bloom and fragrance. The glass doors slid back at the touch of one of Lady Rothsmere's jewelled fingers, and she stepped into a broad bright aisle, bordered by banks of flowers, looking like one mass of bloom.

Hilda Floyd followed close behind her, plucking at the flowers as she went.

The Hungarian Countess led the way into the very centre of the large conservatory, and halted beside a fountain which was in full play. The lights were very mellow and tender in this room, no gas being employed within it. A hundred tiny, slow-burning waxen tapers burned like fire-flies from the midst of thickets of tropical shrubs, and glowed upon the walls, and dotted the glass dome high up, and peeped out from trailing vines, giving a fairy-like air of enchantment to the scene.

"It is very beautiful," said Hilda Floyd, trailing her fingers through the bright waters filling the basin of the fountain. "I must have grandpapa put our conservatory in order. I will outdo this, charming as it is."

"Will your grandpapa do as you wish?" asked Lady Rothsmere, tossing a spray of blossoms on the water, and appearing to watch them intently. "Most grandpapas are surly, I have discovered."

"Mine is no exception to the rule," laughed Miss Floyd. "But I am to succeed him, you know, so he can't refuse me anything. Besides, Lady Rothsmere, although grandpapa is cross, he is not stingy."

"He does not look cross," said the Countess, launching another spray. "He must love you very tenderly."

Miss Floyd shrugged her shoulders.

"Grandpapa is odd," she remarked. "Because I do not look like my father, but like my mother, he does not like me. As if I were accountable for my looks! I am glad I don't look like him. He seems fairly devoted to Miss Glint because she has black eyes and yellow hair. He says she looks like [illegible]is son."

The sensitive mouth of Lady Rothsmere was drawn as with sudden pain, and her brows contracted above her radiant blue eyes, and her face showed agitation.

"The world is all a mystery," said her ladyship, in a troubled voice. "I seem to be in the midst of a frightful labyrinth, and I can find no clue—no clue!"

Miss Floyd was puzzled.

"Are you trying to find a clue to something, Lady Rothsmere?" she asked politely.

"Your sleeve is trailing in the water, Miss Floyd," said the Countess, starting forward. "It is all wet. Permit me to assist you."

She gathered up the flowing sleeves of lace and silk and pressed them tightly between her hands, laying the arm with its bracelets bare. Her ladyship's eyes searched the arm while her hands busied themselves with the dress. She detected a faint, peculiar scar upon the white flesh.

"What is that?" she demanded, with a singular excitement.

"That is a mark I have had since my babyhood," answered Miss Floyd, wondering. "I cut it with papa's knife, which had been carelessly left within my reach. Why, how white you look, Lady Rothsmere. Are you ill?"

"Only a little faint," said the Hungarian Countess, in a weak and troubled voice. "I am subject to attacks of faintness. The scar is a little singular, but not at all a blemish, Miss Floyd. You are fortunate to have only one, and that so small and unimportant."

"It is not so unimportant since it played a part in establishing my identity in grandpapa's eyes," declared Miss Floyd proudly. "And I have more than one. I have a scar like a dagger mark on my arm, such as papa had when born; and that, I can assure you, is a very important mark, as you can understand when you know how great an estate is this of Waldemar."

"It is a bit of evidence then which goes to establish your identity with Hilda Floyd. I understand."

The Hungarian Countess questioned Miss Floyd at length, with the greatest appearance of interest, and the vain girl, flattered and pleased, responded freely. They returned at length to the drawing-room, and as they proceeded thither, Lady Rothsmere's blue eyes were full of a strange perplexity, and she murmured to herself, in a tone too low for ears other than her own:

"Oh, if I but might find a clue!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE PARSON CORNERED.

Parson Burcher was an irrepressible old codger, always seeking opportunity to combat somebody, and never so well satisfied as when he had cornered an opponent. On a cold stormy day during the early spring, when everything without was sloppy and disagreeable, a number of our citizens were assembled in Crummet's store, gathered socially around the great stove, wherein a wholesome fire of hickory wood was burning. Parson Burcher was of the number, and that he was ready for a war of words was evident from the eager, expectant manner in which he watched the various speakers. By and by Sol. Tapworth came in,—"Uncle Sol.," we always called him. Uncle Sol. came to the stove and rubbed his hands in the genial radiation.

"Ugh!" said he, with a shake and a shrug, "this is what I call a cold, wet rain."

"It sartinly is," responded Crummet.

"I'd like to ask," put in the Parson, with dictatorial dignity, "if you ever heard of any other kind of rain."

"Eh?" said Uncle Sol., looking up.

"I ask," repeated the Parson, with the air and emphasis of a master,—"did you ever hear of any other kind of storm, or rain?"

"I said this was cold and wet," persisted Uncle Sol.

"And did you ever hear of a rain that was hot and dry?" asked Parson Burcher, triumphantly.

"Ye-e-s,—I think I have," replied Uncle Sol., with a very assured nod of the head, and a quiet smile twinkling around his eyes. "How was it, Parson, about the *rain that the Lord sent down upon Sodom and Gomorrah?*"

For once in his life Parson Burcher was so completely cornered that he had not another word to offer.

S. C., JR.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1872.

WE always stop the LEDGER at the expiration of the year, or of the time for which it is paid, so that if you wish to continue it, it would be well to renew your subscriptions at least one week before the time expires.

OUR TERMS FOR 1872—NOW IS THE TIME TO SUBSCRIBE.

Single copies, $3 per annum; four copies, $10, which is $2.50 a copy; eight copies, $20. The party who sends us $20 for a club of eight copies, (all sent at one time,) will be entitled to a copy *free.* Postmasters and others who get up clubs, in their respective towns, can afterwards add single copies at $2.50. No subscriptions taken for a less period than one year. Canada subscribers must send twenty cents in addition to the subscription, to pay the American postage. When a draft or money-order can conveniently be sent, it will be preferred, as it will prevent the possibility of the loss of money by mail. The postage on the *Ledger* to all parts of the country is only twenty cents a year, or five cents a quarter, payable at the office where the paper is delivered.

☞ We employ no travelling agents. Address all communications to

ROBERT BONNER, Publisher,
Corner of William and Spruce sts., New York.

Capital Punishment—An Interesting Discussion.

The same difference of opinion which has long existed on this interesting and important subject still continues. A recent debate in the British Parliament as to the expediency of abolishing the penalty of death altogether, elicited many pertinent statistical facts, and brought in collision some of the ablest of English statesmen; but the final vote showed a decided and large preponderance of opinion in favor of retaining capital punishment on the statute book.

The following are some among the most striking facts elicited in the course of this discussion:

MR. BRUCE, the Home Secretary, who virtually controls the granting of pardons after conviction of a capital offence, said that every Home Secretary took it upon himself, in more than one instance, to differ from the Judges, and act upon his own opinion, in recommending to the Crown the modification of sentences.

Among the writers cited in opposition to capital punishment were Earl RUSSELL, JOHN BRIGHT, the Duke of ARGYLL and Lord LYTTON.

A majority of judges are in favor of capital punishment, but they are not unanimous, and an eminent Irish jurist remarked that a judge has no better opportunity of forming an opinion on the subject of capital punishment than any other man. Judges have uniformly resisted all attempts to lessen the punishment of crime; and when Sir SAMUEL ROMILLY proposed to abolish the punishment of death for stealing property of the value of five shillings from a shop, Lord ELLENBOROUGH and Lord ELDON declared that it was not safe to abolish capital punishment even for that trifling offence.

It was asserted that there were formerly 230 offences for which people were hanged, and that now there remains only one; but this last statement must be incorrect, as treason, murder, and several other offences are still punishable with death.

Henry VIII. hanged 2,000 persons for robbery alone.

Queen Elizabeth executed 500 criminals a year.

Public executions have been found to be most pernicious in their effects. Criminals so punished had almost invariably attended executions themselves. Out of 167 condemned convicts, 164 had seen persons hung.

In Belgium there are instances where perpetual imprisonment has been inflicted without injury to the health or reason of the prisoners; and one of the American delegates at the recent International Prison Congress, stated that the most cheerful inmate of the jail of Pennsylvania, was a man who had been confined there twenty years.

Several speakers dwelt upon the point that the feeling of abhorrence, on the part of jurors, against being instrumental in inflicting the punishment of death, renders it very difficult, frequently, to obtain convictions, even where the evidence is clear. Sir C. O'LOGHLEN stated that within forty-eight hours he himself had prosecuted a man about whose conviction, but for the penalty of death, he felt certain, but who, in consequence of the state of the law, had been acquitted.

The Attorney-General of Ireland was opposed to any change in the law; and the Attorney-General of England concluded a short speech with the remark that he held the strongest opinion that in the worst cases it would not be wise to do away with the punishment of death.

When the vote came to be taken, it stood only fifty-four against capital punishment to one hundred and sixty-seven in favor of it; being a majority of one hundred and thirteen in favor of retaining it on the statute book.

◆

United they were in their Lives, and in their Death they were not Divided.

The following paragraph is from the Hudson *Advertiser:*

> "Very sad news comes from Malta, Ill., of the almost simultaneous death of Mr. and Mrs. Jonas Niver, formerly of this village. They were both attacked with typhoid fever on the same day, about two weeks ago, and after a severe and painful illness of twelve days, they passed away from earth only two hours apart, on the 22d inst. Mr. Niver and his wife were born and reared in Kinderhook, and nearly all their nearest relatives are now living in this vicinity."

In an old graveyard at Rutland, Vermont, there is a tombstone erected over the remains of an aged couple who were born on the same day, and, being husband and wife, of course they were married on the same day, and they both died on the same day.

We look upon the last as a fortunate coincidence. As death must come to all, we esteem it a kindness if it come to man and wife—especially when both have lived to be old—at the same time.

◆

Death from Eating Green Apples.

[From the Hudson (N. Y.) Star.]

A young man named Robinson, a former resident of New York, who has been in this city for some time past, eat some green apples Saturday last, and was seized with an attack of cholera morbus, which resulted in his death yesterday. This should prove a terrible warning to all persons not to eat green apples.

A Wise Act of Gov. Hoffman—Insane Asylums to be Investigated.

We are glad to see that a recommendation long since urgently made in the *Ledger*—that a commission should be appointed to examine into the condition of the lunatic asylums of this State—has at length been acted upon by Gov. HOFFMAN. He has appointed the Attorney-General, Dr. ANDERSON, President of the Rochester University—and one of the twelve presidents of colleges who contributed a series of original articles to our columns—and Dr. THOMAS HUN of Albany, a commission to investigate all charges that may be laid before them, against any asylum for lunatics, whether under public or private management, and to visit and inspect the several asylums, with or without charges being made against them, with a view to discovering abuses wherever they exist, and has requested them to report the result of their inquiries as soon as possible.

We heartily commend Gov. HOFFMAN for his action in this matter. Sufficient facts have come under our own observation to satisfy us that the power to commit persons to the lunatic asylums, reposed by law in every Justice of the Peace, without any other evidence than the mere certificate of two physicians, has been greatly abused. Many a person, we have every reason to believe, has been shut up on allegations of insanity which were untrue, for the purpose of accomplishing some ulterior object, such as the prevention of a marriage, or more frequently, the bequest or distribution of property.

It is high time that the whole subject should be officially investigated, and we hope Gov. HOFFMAN'S Commissioners will discharge their high duty fearlessly, and in the most thorough and searching manner.

◆

War and its Swindles—Punishment of Dishonest Contractors.

We have all fallen somewhat into the habit, of late, of looking with a feeling at least bordering on contempt, upon the empire—at present, nominally, the republic—of France. But in some respects it will have to be acknowledged France is ahead of the United States. To a certain class of offenders she administers justice with a more unsparing hand. We refer to the detestable scoundrels who, during war, are willing to speculate out of the flesh and blood—the lives—of their countrymen. These are the dishonest contractors who defraud at once the government out of its money and the soldiers out of their clothing. To make their own existence easy and pampered, they sacrifice the lives of many and the hopes of their country. One has been sentenced to five years' imprisonment; another to three years; and both were fined four hundred thousand francs.

This measure of justice contrasts strangely with the escape of similar miscreants in our own country. Men who cheated our government out of hundreds of thousands of dollars now loom up at our watering places, and in what is called "society," and expect to be classed among the *élite.*

So long as money in itself—the mere possession of wealth, however acquired—shall continue to be a passport to popular favor, a reward is in effect set upon fraud. Yet is it not a shame to see the honest, toil-worn, crippled, patriotic soldier, straggling along on foot, or fainting by the wayside, while the dishonest contractor, grown rich out of wronging him and his more unfortunate comrades who perished in the army, flaunts his ill-gotten riches, and rolls past in his gorgeous carriage, drawn by gayly caparisoned steeds, prancing under the crack of the whip in the hand of his liveried driver?

If a rope should ever be put around any man's neck, it ought to be around the neck of the dishonest contractor in time of war.

◆

Fiendish Attack by Burglars—What Should be Done with Them?

PROVIDENCE, Aug. 20.—The house of Job F. Angell, an old and wealthy citizen of North Providence, was entered by two negroes early this morning. Mr. Angell's daughter, Mrs. Frances M. Brown, of Brooklyn, was first awakened, and made the outcry, whereupon one of the negroes beat her in the face and attempted to choke her to silence. Mrs. Angell went to her daughter's assistance, and one of the robbers shot her with a pistol, the ball passing through the breast and the fleshy part of the arm. Mr. Angell shouted to have his gun brought, and the robbers fled, without any plunder. Neither of the women are fatally injured.

The above paragraph appeared as a telegraphic dispatch to the daily papers. We copy it for the purpose of asking of legislators what reason there is why these brutal creatures, if once captured, should ever be set at liberty again?

They are probably of the very lowest type of human beings to be found in a civilized community. Of course their intellectual and moral faculties should be cultivated and developed, as far as practicable. They should be furnished with comfortable quarters. But we do not see why, as we have said of other similar cases, they should ever be set at liberty again. It is hardly likely that such wretches will ever become sufficiently enlightened and capable of self-control for them to be left at large, with safety to the community.

They might be allowed a part of their earnings, to be expended in procuring extra comforts for them. This would contribute to their happiness, and at the same time stimulate their industry in working for the State. There should be nothing vindictive or unchristian in their punishment; but it does seem ridiculous to shut them up a while and then turn them loose, with the moral certainty that they will commit new, and very likely still greater crimes. The deliberation shown in this case proves the diabolical nature of the men, and although that may be more or less modified, it is not likely to be essentially changed.

◆

Trying to Find Out a Woman's Age.

In a recent trial for breach of promise of marriage, the plaintiff, who was a widow with grown-up children, testified in her own behalf. On cross-examination, the counsel for the defendant made an unsuccessful attempt to ascertain her age, as follows:

Counsel for Defendant—If you please, state what is your age.

Widow—I am younger than his first wife, any way.

Counsel—Well, that does not let us know. Will you tell us your age?

Widow—I am younger than his first wife.

Counsel—May I say *sixty?*

Widow—Now you are too far.

Court—Madam, how old is your oldest son?

Widow—He is dead. My eldest son living is twenty-four.

Court—Will you tell your age?

Widow—I think you don't want to know.

Counsel—But you have a daughter; what age is she?

Widow—Inquire for yourself.

Counsel—Well, I won't press you any further.

It was said that the widow was sixty-one, while the defendant was forty-four. At all events, the jury thought him old enough to know better than to make promises and break them, and young enough to learn better for the future, and they brought in a verdict against him for $750.

HAY FEVER.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

TWIN MOUNTAIN HOUSE,
Carrol, Coos Co., N. H., August 20, 1872.

There you have the whole address of this charming mountain house, which is fast becoming a kind of *sanitarium* for all afflicted with Hay Fever, or as Prof. Wyman calls it, in his excellent, and the only excellent book on the subject, *autumnal catarrh.* Yet, do not imagine, O, rosy and rugged ROBERT BONNER, that we are all a dismal set of lachrymose creatures, wielding handkerchiefs, and moping in dark corners. We are the merriest of sick folks. We dwell in perpetual congratulations. Now and then a cheery question is put, whether one *yet* escapes the dismal attack; but otherwise, we go forth, day by day, like other people, facing the sun, standing in the wind, riding, rowing, rolling, and romping with the children, of which there is a glorious bevy here, and so charming that one sensitive to the Ten Commandments is kept on the stool of repentance all day long, for the sin of coveting. Here is a little fellow who shed his skirts on leaving home, and now emerges in pantaloons and jackets, and walks about like a travelling exclamation point, in a wondering admiration of his new rig. Another little fellow in nurse's arms, is known as the baby boy with the hat, for he insists on wearing a little blue ribbon-tied straw hat in doors and out, at table and in the halls. No doubt he sleeps in it. Right opposite me sits at table a little four-year-old damsel, round and plump-cheeked, long locks hanging behind, hair cut quaker style over her eyes, which eyes will some day make trouble among the young fellows. Then there is the little midget, with flashing black eyes. She is quicker of motion than a humming-bird. She coaxes you to her, and then runs away. If you chase her she hides in the crowd, steals behind you, and hitches your coat, and is gone again in a twinkling. Then there is little blue eyes, and little brown head, and each one has an "'ittle brother," and all of them love bonbons, and none of them will "go home with me" unless I take "pa and ma," and every one of them will listen to a story if it is not too long.

The bigger children are without number, and time would fail me to tell all the unfoldings which every day exhibits, and all quite amusing to one who looks upon life with charitable eyes and gentle curiosity.

In these cool halls Fashion hath never set her foot. One dresses as pleaseth him or her. From five in the morning—is it not?—till eleven the breakfast is served, and every one comes without looks or words of rebuke for being late. Some few hold on to their habits of early rising, but many are making up the sleep which they have lost for a year past, and long after the sun—even till the dew is dried upon the grass—they slumber on toward health and fullness of nerve.

The Ammonusuc rolls within a stone's throw of the long veranda. There are boats, there are bridges to build, seats to be founded in favorite spots, wading and pebble hunting for some, flowers, ferns and leaves, which already are prophecying autumn in auroral colors. The near hills are to be climbed, the shaded roads made by lumbermen through the woods are to be explored; wonderful rocks occupy the attention of the young Agassiz'. Other naturalists go forth with rods, not "for the fool's back," but for trout. Guns there are, but no game—none that any one ever bags. There are deer in the mountains, and now comes home some astonished gentleman with the story of how near he was, how easily he could have shot him, if only he had remembered to take his gun along with him! Before our wide open eyes have time to get back to their original state, we learn that a bear crossed the road, in plain sight of the gentleman who sports dogs and a gun. The creature was in no hurry. He entered the woods, and then, as if wishing to see what effect his presence had produced, he stopped, reared up upon his hind legs, looked my gentleman all over, and then, with provoking *nonchalance,* waddled home to tell its cubs what a sight it had seen; while the "sight" himself drives home to tell the tale, and fill all our palpitating breasts with regret that he had not taken his gun, instead of his wife, out on that ride.

But scarcely has our flesh ceased to creep, when a fierce young man arrives with tidings that a strange animal had crossed *his* path. It was about the size of a dog, of brindle color, short stub tail, small ears, with a cat-like face. It moved across the road with an untroubled gait, turning its face upon the spectator, merely to see if he had a gun! Of course he had not. And now, instead of planting our slippered feet on bear-skins, and catamount fur, we are, per force, content with carpets, and all because these "sons of a gun" had no gun with them.

We have quite forgotten the Hay Fever, with which subject we began our epistle. Well, that's the way up here. We all forget it. Here is —— from Philadelphia, and —— from New York, and several ——'s from Brooklyn, and many ——'s from States afar off, and all of them behaving just as if there was no such thing as Hay Fever. Think of such charming doctors as these mountains! Cast back the memory to the powders, the pills, the decoctions, the elixirs, the snuff, the baths, the bandages, the goggles, the gargles, the vapor for the eyes, the troches for the throat, the saline drinks to work off the various abominable draughts. But here are no bottles, vials, boxes, papers, but *mountain air!* The sun feels your pulse daily, looks you all over, and tells you to come again to-morrow. To-morrow he again inspects your case, and puts you upon a full course of air. The great round blue heaven above your head is your medicine chest, and down drops from it every moment those restorative prescriptions which cure both soul and body.

In despair of nurses, doctors and medicines, we devoutly join with the venerable Jew, and exclaim, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."

◆

Youthful Criminals.

A boy in this city, only twelve years of age, stabbed a playmate with a knife, it is supposed fatally.

The New Bedford (Mass.) *Mercury* contains the following account of a band of youthful burglars, the eldest and the ring-leader of which is only *fifteen,* and the youngest *eight* years of age:

> "Sunday morning, at half-past ten o'clock, five boys from eight to fifteen years of age, attempted to enter Antone Sylvia's grocery store, on the corner of Howland and South Water streets, by prying open a rear door with an ax. They were seen and frightened away by some of the residents in that vicinity. It has since appeared that the plan was concocted on Saturday night, and that one of the boys, who was in the store after the proprietor commenced shutting up, unhooked this door, thinking it would not be noticed; but this part of the plan failed, hence the attempt to break in by force. The youthful rogues expected to secure candy, cigars, and about $10 in money. A boy fifteen years old was ring-leader, and originator of the scheme."

A boy was once executed for murder, in England, at the age of *nine* years! Quite recently a boy only *eight* years old was indicted and tried in London for manslaughter in causing the death of another boy, about the same age, by throwing a stone at him. But it appeared that the injured boy was weakly, and that the blow with the stone would not, probably, have killed him otherwise, and the jury acquitted the youthful prisoner.

◆

Large Dividend.

It is announced that the Union Mill, at Fall River, Mass., has paid a six months' dividend of seven hundred dollars per share on a par value of one thousand dollars! This seems hardly credible; but it is added that the shares are now selling for seven thousand dollars.

THE LAST LETTER.

BY ETHEL LYNN.

Who knows when the *last* letter comes,
  How tender and touching a sorrow
May hang o'er the commonplace words
  The postman shall bring with the morrow.

A little white fluttering fold,
  It tells not its terrible story;
Nor whispers, 'neath ripples of speech,
  Its place in the door-way of glory.

We read it, mayhap with a smile,
  Then toss it by idly; undreaming
That, rescued, we'll scan it again
  With glances through bitter rain streaming.

Its chance words of tenderness then,
  Like gold from the mass shall be sifted;
The speech of our ev'ry day life
  Into grandeur and greatness be lifted.

All harshness shall fold itself down,
  As the calyx shrinks under the flower,
All blemishes vanish and fade,
  In the loving regrets of that hour.

The last little blossom dropped out
  From the hand on the bank of the river,
Shall tell from its petals adroop,
  Sweet stories of love from the giver.

◆

THOMAS CHATTERTON.

BY JAMES PARTON.

In the ancient English city of Bristol, there is a stately and beautiful church, several centuries old, called St. Mary Redcliffe. It may not be true, as the sexton informed me once, that it is "the largest parish church in England;" but it is of great magnitude and very great beauty, and filled with the most quaint and interesting monuments. There are effigies of knights in armor lying flat upon their backs, with their legs crossed, and their hands joined as if in prayer. There are statues of ancient benefactors of the church, noble painted windows, curious and elaborately decorated chapels, and above many an ancient grave there hang the armor, the sword, the spear, and the banner of the hero who sleeps beneath. Among the objects in this grand old church which arrest the attention of American visitors, are the armor and banners of Admiral Sir William Penn, father of the founder of Pennsylvania.

In Europe, where they know nothing about rotation in office, or the one-term principle, it is not uncommon for places in church and state to descend from father to son for many generations. It was so with the sextonship of this church. For two centuries the office of sexton had remained in a family named Chatterton—the incumbent being generally named Thomas Chatterton. In 1748, when sexton John Chatterton died, he was succeeded by his son-in-law, who appears to have held the office only until John Chatterton's son was old enough to take it.

Thomas Chatterton, father of the wonderful boy poet of the same name, was of this family of sextons, though not himself the heir of the office. Being, however, in the way of church employment, he received the place of singer in the choir of the Bristol Cathedral, and afterward the mastership of a free school. He was a jovial, dissipated man, fond of reading, a composer of music, a writer of convivial songs—one of those good fellows who abound in cathedral towns, the delight of every circle except that of their own homes, of which they are the blight and the curse. He died in 1752. Three months after his death, his son, Thomas Chatterton, the ill-starred child of genius, was born. His mother, left without property, set up a girl's school, took in sewing and ornamental needle-work, and in these and other ways supported, in an honorable, frugal manner, her aged mother, her daughter, and this marvellous boy. She was a good, kind woman; but as little able to appreciate or understand her son, as a hen to comprehend a soaring falcon which she had hatched from the egg.

At five, he went to the free school at which his father had been master. The teacher soon sent him home as an incorrigible dunce. He could not, or would not learn to read. He was willful, and objected to reading, as he said, out of a small book. But one day his eye was caught by the decorations of an old sheet of music of his father's, which his mother was tearing up for waste paper; and, as she used to say, he fell in love with its illuminated capital letters. He now became interested in his letters, and was taught to read from an old black-letter Bible. From this time, reading was his passion. He read from early morning till bed-time, if they would let him, and nothing pleased him so much as the quaint letters and curious spelling of old books and parchments.

In one of his father's closets there was a quantity of parchments, ancient deeds, conveyances, and other documents, which his father had taken from some oaken chests in an upper room of the church. He delighted to copy the old letters, decorations and emblazonments. He would shut himself up, when he was only seven or eight years of age, in his little attic bedroom, with a piece of ochre, some charcoal dust, some black lead powder, and there he would remain, hour after hour, copying and imitating the ancient manuscripts, and making drawings in the antique style, issuing at length begrimed and black from his work.

He appeared to pass the whole of his boyhood in antiquity; for although from seven to fourteen he attended a Bristol charity school as a boarding scholar, yet he spent Saturday afternoons at home, roaming about the old church, musing upon its inscriptions, or else shut up in his garret, composing poems, such as he supposed might have been written three centuries before. It seemed as if the good priest Rowley, and his patron Canynge, and other worthies buried in the old church, were the only real persons with whom he associated. Them he loved, revered, believed in; but the citizens of Bristol whom he chanced to know were commonplace mortals indeed, with whom he jested, and whom he deceived and played upon, as an elderly person may with a child. He amused himself once by making out a long pedigree for a pewterer of his acquaintance, pretending that he found it in the old church; and he frequently produced pieces of antique verse upon parchment, which he said were written by Thomas Rowley, a priest of the city of Bristol in the time of the Roses.

Not a soul suspected that these antique poems could be his own. To show the power of the verse which he wrote when he was a boy of fifteen or sixteen, I will copy a stanza from one of these poems, the spelling of which has been modernized:

And now the battle closed on every side,
  And face to face appeared the Knights full brave;
They lifted up their bills with mickle pride,
  And many wounds unto the Normans gave.
So have I seen two weirs at once give ground,
  White foaming high, to roaring combat run;
In roaring din and heaven-breaking sound,
  Burst waves on waves, and spangle in the sun;
And when their might in bursting waves is fled,
Like cowards steal along their oozy bed.

Chatterton wrote many a finer stanza even than this, when he was a lad of fifteen. There is no trace of the boy nor of the young man in them. There is a maturity, a strength and finish in many of his antique poems which have never been so much as approached, before or since his time, by so young a person.

Why then should he have chosen to hide his powers in this disguise? Some writers have thought it was a mere whim of genius, a fancy, a wish to mystify and surprise, such as has induced many authors to write in the style and manner of other days. Others have conjectured that the great success of Ossian may have suggested to Chatterton the idea of Thomas Rowley and his ancient poems. The first portion of the Ossian poems appeared in 1760, when Chatterton was a child of seven; and in 1762, when the great Ossian hit was made by the publication of Fingal, the boy was little more than nine. All the world was talking of Ossian in those years, and nothing is more likely than that MacPherson's success led poor Chatterton to the impostures which prevented his recognition.

After leaving school, he was bound apprentice to a Bristol attorney to learn the art of a scrivener. During his apprenticeship, this most gifted boy that ever lived, and one who was almost as proud as he was gifted, was obliged to take his meals with the servants and sleep with the foot-boy. His master was a limited, ill-tempered man, who held poetry and literature in savage contempt, and who, if he caught his apprentice writing verses, would tear them up and throw the pieces in his face. One advantage, however, he had in the office of this man: he had plenty of time to pursue his studies, and manufacture his documents.

Among his chance acquaintances was a pompous, shallow antiquary named Barrett, who was engaged in writing an elaborate folio history of Bristol. No antiquary was ever more gullible than this one. Chatterton supplied him with an abundance of ancient records, descriptions of old churches, castles, and crosses, wholly his own composition, but which he said he had found in the ancient chests of the church. Barrett incorporated them into his history without questioning, rewarding the boy occasionally with a few shillings. From his tenth year, Chatterton sent poems to a weekly paper in Bristol, and occasionally palmed off upon the editor some antique description, his own composition, of an interesting event in Bristol history. At sixteen, he was a frequent contributor to the London periodical called *The Town and Country Magazine.*

The dream of his life was to go to London, get his poems published, and become a great and famous author. As preparatory to this, he wrote to Horace Walpole, author of a work upon painters and painting, offering to supply him with "several curious manuscripts" relating to ancient Bristol painters, and inclosing a few as specimens. At first Walpole was delighted, and cordially thanked his correspondent. Soon, however, with the aid of some of his literary friends, he discovered that the "curious manuscripts" were manufactured, and refused to have anything further to do with the lad—as was natural. There never lived but one Chatterton, and Walpole cannot be blamed for not understanding at a glance, and at a distance, so strange and difficult an enigma. He ought indeed to have been startled at some of the Rowley poems which Chatterton sent him. He was not insensible to their merit, but his indignation at the attempt upon his credulity closed his heart against the poet.

To London, however, Chatterton went, when he was seventeen years of age, in quest of fame and fortune, full of confidence in himself and in his future. Boy as he was, he had an appearance of maturity beyond his years. His best and kindest biographer, Dr. Daniel Wilson, of University College, Toronto, describes him as having a proud and frank bearing, a manly presence, an air of spirit and self-reliance. He wrote home to his mother in the highest spirits, and plunged into literary life with amazing vigor and buoyancy. He wrote essays for the political papers in the style of Junius; he wrote satirical poems and political squibs; he wrote the words of burlettas played at the theatre; he wrote anything and everything that he could sell; holding, however, his Rowley poems in reserve for a time when he could bring them out in becoming style. His habits were perfectly temperate and regular, and when he had an occasional piece of good luck, the first use he made of it was to send home presents for his mother, his sister and his grandmother. He loved his mother dearly, and wanted fame and fortune as much for her sake as his own.

For a few months he lived by his pen—frugally and precariously, it is true—but still he lived. Literary labor then was most meanly compensated indeed. He would get eight pence for writing a song, and a shilling for a long essay. The only considerable sum he ever received was five guineas for a burletta in verse. He would not go in debt. If he had no money, he starved, and sometimes when he was starving, he was too proud to accept a dinner. Even to the last, he was a solvent person; for he had in the offices of magazines accepted articles enough to give him daily bread for some weeks longer, if he could have brought himself to make known his situation. When he had passed two or three days without food, he went to his room and swallowed poison, and he was found the next morning with limbs and features distorted, a frightful corpse. At the time of his death, he was seventeen years and nine months old.

His poems were published some years after, and they yielded a sum of money for the benefit of his sister, who was living in extreme poverty. A monument has been erected to his memory in the church-yard of St. Mary Redcliffe. But his best memorial is Dr. Wilson's work, named above, in which the mystery of his life and genius is interpreted with equal charity and acuteness.

◆

WOMEN OF BUSINESS.

It has long been a question with me, whether what woman gains in strength she does not lose in grace. I am sure this need not be so; at least only so long as we are in the crudities. I jealously watch every conversation on such subjects between the sexes. Not long since, I overheard some remarks of a relative to a widow whose husband, a builder, was just deceased. She had been as much a stranger to business up to this period as one of her own children, when she suddenly announced her determination to complete several houses for which he was under contract. Friends stood aghast. But, nothing daunted, spite of indifference and discouragement, she went bravely on. The men in her employ soon found out that they could not be eye-servants; for was not Madam upon the ground as early as seven in the morning, to see if they were at their posts, and performing their several duties? Nor were they forgotten when pay-day came. Money was given out and receipts were taken as if she had been brought up on ledgers and bank accounts.

I pricked up my ears. Was this the "coming" woman? Had she children? Who washed their faces, mended their clothes, spanked them when necessary, and kept the raspberry jam intact?

While I listened for an answer to these queries, I found others had been curious, particularly the male sex. One from whom I expected notes of admiration, remarked, with raised eyebrows, "Sharp woman that—where was the baby the while?" From not one did I hear an approbative remark. And yet these very men would have been the first to deplore an added burden to the already overweighted father or brother.

I inquired as to the graces—whether she had lost sight of them during this spasm of business. I found that my lady's bonnet was as daintily trimmed by her own fingers as if they had not been smirched by ledger accounts. She entertained at dinner; she presided at tea; she graced a reception. Still the men shook their heads. What could be the matter? For a long time I puzzled my head in vain; for her character to my eye seemed to be as round as a circle. At last I hit upon it. Dr. Holland, I hit upon it! She was *not* "the clinging vine!" She stood on *her own* feet, though the oak *was* felled to the earth.

Moral: Every woman should *carry* a staff, though she may not need to use it.

FANNY FERN.

◆

—Genius is the gold in the mine, talent is the miner who works and brings it out.

WIN.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

Be brave to the end, and you will win. * * The only true courage is the courage which is founded on conscience, and is unconquerable.—*N. Y. Ledger*.

There's a diadem most massive,
Iron-rimmed and diamond set,
And the earnest brow that wears it
Never has been conquered yet.
There may be some seeming failures,
But for battle still is flame:
Triumph must reward the owner—
Courage is his mighty name.

He has trod the tallest mountains;
He has rode the fiercest seas;
On the Wind's unbounded regions
Spread his broad Flag to the breeze.
Tempests often have assailed it,
But it never has been furled,
And must never, if man holds his
Regal patent to the world.

Have you enemies open, secret,
Even in the grandest aims?
Would they use the treacherous dagger,
Or in front hurl deadly flames?
O, no matter! keep right onward—
Onward—onward though alone,
And you'll stand in real honor,
Crown on brow and foes o'erthrown.

Nor is bravery needed only
In the fury of such strife:
It must be to us sustainer
Through the inner walk of life.
Death may take away the dearest;
Would we still act the true part?
Then, with trust on Heaven unbroken,
Hug that Courage in the heart.

Thus we will have angel music,
Yes, whatever sorrow falls;
And by never quailing make us
Worthy of the Starry Halls:
For this Courage, based on Conscience,
Is the Giant on Earth's sod,
Building up in every action
Real altars unto God.

THE BLACK DOCTOR;

OR, THE

Prophecy of the Voodoo King.

AN HISTORICAL TALE OF THE SPANISH RULE IN LOUISIANA.

By **WILLIAM HENRY PECK**,
Professor of History in the University of the State of Louisiana.

CHAPTER XXV.

OF THE RUSSIANS.

Leon saw himself confronted by a tall, lean, dark and muscular mulatto, whose huge lips and noseless face made his features both hideous and terrible, and whose large bull-like skull was covered by a close-fitting red cap.

The reader recognizes Sancho Perez in this brief description—Sancho Perez in his character of Joseph.

Perez saw before him a tall and handsome young man, elegantly clad, well formed and athletic, with dark and rather thin features, which were expressive of pride and cunning, and coal-black eyes, in which lurked both courage and duplicity. But the courage was that of the assassin who does not fear to kill in the dark.

Perez, as he sprang to his feet, had drawn the long knife which he wore in a leathern sheath fixed to the belt that girdled his coarse trowsers at the waist; but he remained motionless as he saw the eyes of the young man glittering behind the flint of the levelled musket.

"Diablos!" thought Perez, not at all pleased with his situation. "This is as near death as I have ever been! A mistake on my part, and this youngster will fire at me as he would at a dog. Caramba!" and a cold sweat began to ooze out upon the dyed skin of the disguised convict.

But let us explain how it was that Perez chanced to be thus surprised by Leon de Vargas, before we narrate what passed between them.

Don Sebastian and his three companions, Ivan, Perez and old Juan, after their escape from the sea, were put ashore by the captain of the vessel which had rescued them. This vessel continued on its way to New Orleans, after the above four, at the desire of Don Sebastian, were put ashore on the east bank of the Mississippi, a few miles below the city, at a place not far from where Jackson defeated Packenham nineteen years later.

A few days after the landing, the party took possession of a deserted hut, or log-house, in the swamp in the rear of the city, and at a distance of about five miles from the Varlville Mansion. During the same time Ivan rented a small house in the outskirts of the city, distant about a mile from the Varlville Mansion, and near the river. Ivan also purchased a large gray mule, strong and fleet; and after Perez and Juan, who were both very familiar with the localities, had shown to Don Sebastian and Ivan the various paths to and fro between the house in the city and the hut in the woods, a new Voodoo doctor suddenly claimed the notice of the blacks, not only of the city, but also of the neighboring plantations.

This new Voodoo doctor called himself Adraste Scipian, and was said to live principally in the swamps, though he had a kind of office in the house hired by Ivan.

Ivan no longer went by the name of Ivan, nor appeared in the character of a servant; but was known in New Orleans only as an eccentric French priest, and by the name of Father or Père Dominique. Nothing of his features and true proportions could be seen as he moved along the streets, hooded and gowned.

Don Sebastian as Don Sebastian was never seen in New Orleans. Don Sebastian had become Adraste Scipian, the Voodoo doctor, as soon as he learned that a negress named Mercita was still the slave of Madame Varlville.

This last fact was made known to Don Sebastian by Perez, who obtained the information in his character of Joseph, also as a Voodoo doctor belonging to Père Dominique, or at least as the servant of Père Dominique.

Perez, sometimes at the house in the city and sometimes at the hut in the swamp, had soon discovered that it was the desire of Don Sebastian and Ivan to see the negress Mercita, and to question her upon some matter which contained a mystery to him.

Although Don Sebastian and Ivan had no suspicion that Perez understood Russian, and therefore often conversed in that language in his presence, he had not discovered the true name of the person whom they always designated as "The Living Cross of Saint Andrew," or as "The Cross;" but he had found that they believed the negress Mercita had once belonged to that person, and that Mercita alone was able to give them information by which they could find that person. He also discovered that they feared this negress might remain faithful to some promise which they imagined she had made to "The Cross," and that she still might be a firm friend to "The Cross," or, as they sometimes designated that person, "Isadora Raymundo."

Perez had also discovered that Don Sebastian and Ivan were both Russian noblemen, and that Don Sebastian was of higher rank than Ivan.

Perez had made a few more discoveries—discoveries that had startled him greatly. He had learned that it was the purpose of the two Russians to destroy "The Cross;" that "The Cross" meant a woman and her child; that the child of the woman was not to be destroyed if it was a girl, but certainly to be destroyed if a male; that the age of "The Cross" was about thirty-two or three years, and the age of her child, if living, was about sixteen years; that the two Russians were acting partly as the agents of Catherine the Second, Empress of Russia, and partly from motives of self-interest and personal feeling; and that they had no doubt that "the Cross" whom they were so eager to find only to destroy, was the young woman whom old Juan had seen taken from the chest of Paul Smolenski—that is, the Angelique of Sancho Perez

Therefore, if the suspicions of the two disguised Russian nobles were correct, "The Cross" was that "Isadora Raymundo" whom Perez hated, and that "Angelique" whom Perez loved.

All this rather incoherent knowledge came to Perez through such scraps of private conversation of Don Sebastian and Ivan, as had been overheard by him.

But though Perez soon learned from negroes that a negress named Mercita belonged to Madame Varlville, and that she had been purchased by that lady some twelve years before, and though he and the two Russians had no doubt that she was the negress Mercita sold by Sancho Perez to Madame Varlville, he failed to see her.

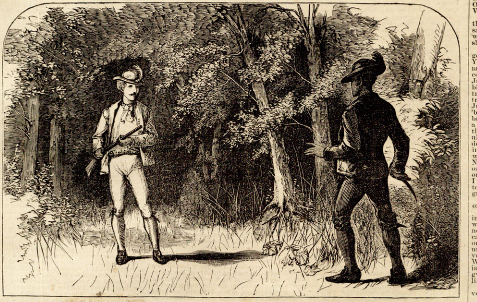
The servants of Madame Varlville did not dare to permit a Voodoo doctor to put foot upon her premises. Her animosity toward all Voodoo doctors and priests was well known, and only when she was believed to be dead or dying, did any one dare to admit a Voodoo doctor into the mansion.

Mercita was never known to leave the mansion alone. So far as the servants of the house knew, she had not once left it, alone, since the day of her entrance into it as the housekeeper of Madame Varlville; at least they could not say that she had ever left it, except in the company of her mistress, to whom, they said, Mercita was devotedly attached.

It was before Perez learned this strict seclusion of Mercita, and immediately after he had informed Don Sebastian that a negress named Mercita was still the slave of Madame Varlville, when Don Sebastian began his movements under the name of Adraste Scipian, and as a Voodoo doctor.

As Mercita did not leave the mansion, and as strange persons were never admitted into it, the two Russians resolved, if possible, to take her thence by stealth. But this design they soon abandoned, because, as Perez discovered from their conversation, they decided that the project was only to be thought of as a last resort.

They would have contrived to kidnap Mercita had she stirred abroad. But this she did not do; and yet they deemed that it was imperatively necessary that she should be wholly in their power ere they, or any one, should ask a single question concerning the person who had placed her in the hands of Sancho Perez to be sold, twelve years before.



THE PRETENDED VOODOO PRIEST SURPRISED BY LEON DE VARGAS.

They were keenly afraid of the vigilance which they suspected surrounded the concealment of a fact of which they seemed to be assured—that is, that "The Cross" was alive, and somewhere in America, if not in Louisiana, or that if she were dead, her child, of whose sex they were ignorant, was living, and that Smolenski was also living, and guarding the secret of "The Cross."

Therefore they waited, though not patiently, hoping that in time Mercita might leave the mansion. For certain reasons known only to themselves, neither of the Russians ventured to attempt to enter the mansion in any disguise while the peace of the household remained undisturbed.

Neither had they any wish to see the negress simply, but to have her where they could terrify or torture her into revealing that which they suspected she knew.

Either could have assumed some disguise and gained an interview with Madame Varlville, or even obtained a chance to see Mercita. But neither dared to question Madame Varlville of why "The Lord's Prayer," in four languages, was found by Sancho Perez in her house twelve years before, nor of the person who wrote it; for, said they, perhaps Madame Varlville is a friend of "The Cross," and if not, she might speak of their questions to her confidential servant, the negress Mercita, who might warn the one they sought for of renewed efforts to find her.

It was not known to them, nor suspected by them, that Mercita herself had written that polyglot "Lord's Prayer." They were assured only that the prayer was written by some one known to them, at about the time when Mercita first became an inmate of the Varlville Mansion.

They knew nothing of the belief of Perez, that Mercita had been the amanuensis of Isadora Raymundo. Had the Russians known as much of Isadora Raymundo's letters regarding Mercita as Perez did, they would have known, ere they arrived in New Orleans, that which flashed like sudden and most unexpected lightning into the brain of Don Sebastian, when, as Adraste Scipian, before Madame Varlville, his eyes for the first time fully met those of Mercita—that is, that the supposed negress Mercita was "THE CROSS," the very woman for whom they were seeking—the woman old Juan had seen taken from the chest of Smolenski—Angelique, adored by Perez—Isadora Raymundo, hated by Perez—a Russian princess, of whose death Catherine the Second, Empress of Russia, was most eager to be fully and indubitably assured.

But having no suspicion of what doubtless the reader has long perceived, that Mercita was the person whom they called "The Cross of Saint Andrew," and believing that they were to obtain information concerning that person only through Mercita, whom they had never seen, and only by having the supposed negress wholly in their power, the Russians waited for several days.

And while they waited and watched, Don Sebastian, in the character of Adraste Scipian, increased his fame as a wonderful Voodoo doctor among the blacks of the city. In this character he was aided by the disguised Perez, who, as an assistant Voodoo doctor, often accompanied him. Don Sebastian was by education a learned physician, and far superior in his medical knowledge to all the practicing physicians of the city. Perez was familiar, ere he went to the mines, with all the barbarous charlatanism of negro Voodoo doctors and priests. In the mines he had learned many of the tricks of jugglers and pretended wizards from some of his fellow-convicts, who had practised those deceptive arts before they became convicts. Ivan was a well-informed man, and in the character of Pére Dominique greatly aided Don Sebastian in gaining fame among the negroes as a Voodoo doctor.

Don Sebastian's desire to obtain this fame arose from his belief that, in the character of a Voodoo doctor, he could obtain from Mercita all the information he desired. He supposed Mercita was a negress, and at the same time in the service of "The Cross," and especially at the time when "The Cross" was acting under the name of "Isadora Raymundo," for both of the Russians believed that "The Cross" and "Isadora Raymundo" were the same person—that is, a certain Russian Princess whom they were seeking.

And if that Princess was, as they suspected, concealed in Louisiana, it was very necessary for them to be well disguised to foil that vigilance which for many years had baffled all the efforts to capture or destroy the princess. Who this princess was, and why she thus concealed herself, and why she was sought for, must be told further on in our story.

The efforts of Empress Catherine II. of Russia to obtain possession of this fugitive princess and her child, or to be assured of their death, began four years before the princess escaped from San Domingo in the chest of Smolenski; that is, sixteen years before the poisoning of Madame Varlville.

Soon after the condemnation of Sancho Perez, it was told to the Empress that the Princess and her friend, known to the reader as Paul Smolenski, had perished in the flames which consumed the cottage of the latter in San Domingo.

The reader will remember that the burning of this cottage, and the finding of human bones in its ashes, were alluded to by the pawnbroker in his conversation with Perez in chapter eleven.

But when not quite twelve years had elapsed after the supposed death of Smolenski and the fugitive princess at San Domingo, it was told to the Empress, by a Russian naval officer recently returned to St. Petersburg from Cuba, and a former acquaintance of Smolenski, that he had seen Smolenski in Havana. The naval officer was firm in his assertion that he was not mistaken in recognizing Paul Smolenski.

This statement aroused the long dormant fears of the Empress; and soon after, the two Russian nobles whom we have so far called Don Sebastian and Ivan, arrived in Havana, on board the *Magellan*, the same ship that conveyed the escaped convict Perez to Cuba.

The discovery of "The Lord's Prayer" in the old vest of Sancho Perez, in the pawnbroker's shop, was the first clue obtained by the two Russians to guide them in the renewed search for Smolenski and the fugitive Princess. They were convinced by the date, by the writing, which they recognized unmistakably as that of the Princess, and by what they learned in Havana, that the Princess was not in San Domingo at the time when Smolenski's cottage was burned; and that she had escaped from that island by means of the chest.

It was impossible for them to suspect that the Princess had played the part of the unknown "Isadora Raymundo" and the negress Mercita at the same time. Nothing of the transaction between "Isadora Raymundo" and Sancho Perez had ever been learned or truly suspected by the two Russians. The reader is aware how strictly and why Sancho Perez retained in his own brain all that he had had to do with "Isadora Raymundo."

In Havana the two Russians resolved to visit New Orleans, and there to learn first if the negress Mercita sold by Perez to Madame Varlville was still living; then, if she were alive, to get her into their hands; and then, knowing how all negroes feared and revered Voodooism, to persuade, or terrify, or force her into a confession of all they imagined she knew of Smolenski and the fugitive Princess.

After their arrival in Louisiana, after they had ascertained that the negress Mercita was still living, and in the Varlville Mansion, and after Don Sebastian had begun to make his fame as Adraste Scipian, the Russians found that it was apparently impossible to get Mercita into their power without alarming the vigilance which they feared was still maintained by the fugitives, wherever they were.

Therefore they waited and watched, forming each day some new plan, and rejecting it on the morrow, and at the same time secretly learning all they could of the Varlville household, most cautiously and through cunning inquiries among the blacks.

At the same time, and with his own purpose in view, the disguised Sancho Perez watched the two Russians, and waited with that patience which he had acquired in the mines, for their discovery of that "Isadora Raymundo" to whom he attributed all his misfortunes.

Perez already viewed the two Russians as enemies; he regarded them as associates in causing the plot of "Isadora Raymundo" which had succeeded against them only by crushing him. They were, to him, two of the spokes in that terrible wheel of Fate that had rolled over him, and mashed him as remorselessly as if he had been a toad. That wheel, as it were, Perez had discovered was some great Russian plot—as Gomaza had warned him. No less a personage than Catherine II., the Empress of Russia, had set this wheel in motion—a wheel that was moving to destroy some one who, in avoiding that wheel, had crushed him. Therefore Perez regarded all Russians now as his mortal foes, and while he waited and watched, and considered himself at last as something that had been taken up by the wheel, he pondered over means by which in the end, if ever he discovered this "Isadora Raymundo," he should be avenged upon her, and also upon all who had in any way been connected with a plot that had made him twelve years a slave in the mines of Almeida.

Though greatly startled when he discovered that the two Russians believed "Isadora Ramundo" and the beautiful young woman he had seen in the cottage of Smolenski to be the same person, that is, his adored Angelique, he soon rejected that surmise as false. His Angelique he believed was some other person, who, like himself, had been drawn under and crushed by this infernal Russian plot. At least he would not believe that "Isadora Raymundo" could have been his Angelique.

"Diablos!" was his reflection, after he had overheard the Russians' conversation. "It cannot be—it must not be, that the hand that sent me to the accursed mines was the hand of my Angelique!"

There was, after all, one pure spot in the soul of this miserable man. The passion which his heart had suddenly conceived for Angelique at the only time he ever saw her, and that was when he saw her in the cottage of Smolenski, sprang from base motives; but during his slavery in the mines that passion had become such devotion of soul as a religious devotee pours forth mentally to the imagined vision of an adored saint.

In brief, this convict, who believed in nothing supernatural, had created for his soul's worship a deity, a goddess, which he called Angelique, and to which belonged the face of the young woman he had seen only once, and then in the cottage of Smolenski.

On the day in which Perez was to first meet Leon de Vargas, that is, a few days before Madame Varlville was poisoned, Perez left the hut in the swamp to go to the city.

At this hut old Juan abode, and at times he, Perez, Ivan and Don Sebastian were all there. Neither of the latter two ever slept in the hut. Juan always did, and sometimes Perez did also. But in general Perez, known in New Orleans only by the name of Joseph, remained at night in that house which we have stated Ivan had hired in the outskirts of the city.

On the day alluded to above, Don Sebastian, in his character as Adraste Scipian, and mounted on his gray mule, had ridden from the city—which then numbered scarcely more than five thousand inhabitants—to Juan's hut, where Perez had remained during the preceding night.

This visit of Don Sebastian was not from mere restlessness, and after remaining in and near the hut for some time, he said to Perez and Juan:

"I have lost something, and I am very anxious to find it. It is a miniature portrait of a young lady painted on ivory, and set in gold. I first became aware of my loss last night, after my return to the city. I know that I had the miniature here yesterday, in this hut. I may have lost it between the hut and the city. I will reward the finder liberally. On the back, which is gold, is a Saint Andrew's cross, set in small diamonds, and an inscription which of course neither of you can read. I fear I lost it in the swamp, and that I shall never regain it. Do you, Joseph, devote all this day to a search for the miniature, and take the path over which you and I came to the hut yesterday, as it was by that I returned yesterday. You, Juan, may devote the day to searching everywhere in and about the hut."

After some additional remarks, which plainly revealed his great anxiety to find the lost miniature, Don Sebastian mounted his mule and rode away.

"You is a Voodoo priest," remarked old Juan to Perez, whose identity he had never suspected, "why no Voodoo dat loss article into view rite off? Seen loss articles Voodooed into de find often by de great Syphaxo. His ches' in de hut dar, you know."

But Perez made no reply, and walked away into the dense woods.

"Dat niggah," was the soliloquy of old Juan, as he began to poke about at random among the leaves and dried twigs around the cottage, "de sulkiest brown niggah dat eber I seed! Ob late he been berry sulky. Dis colored hidalgo no like he. But de loss minimature! Whar it? Who gwine find dat? Nobody! Talk 'bout finding needle in haystack! Jess you try to find anyting you done loss in dis swamp! Only de great Syphaxo able to do de like ob dat. Speaking of de great Okee-obi-oki—which war he true name—'spose I go take de Voodoo cane and try to conjer wid dat! De cane in de ches' in de hut dar. Wonder de Senor nebber take dat cane wid him. 'Spose I do all my sarchin' for dat loss article wid de cane."

He looked up and beheld Perez.

"Hi, Josef! come back so soon?"

"It is no use to search for so small a thing in a hurry," replied Perez, who had returned to search the hut first.

"Dat true, Josef, and darfore I is gwine to be deliberate. Fus' I will get de cane ob de great Syphaxo. Wid dat in my hand I begins de hunt."

"Suppose you find it, Juan," said Perez, as the old negro came out of the hut with the cane in his hand.

"'Spose I find it? Why, den I gib it to de Senor."

"No; to me."

"To you!"

"To me."

"Ef you wait twill I do dat, Josef, you bigger fool dan I is," replied Juan, again poking about among the leaves, and using the Voodoo cane.

Perez, quite moody and morose this morning, watched the old negro carelessly, aware that he would soon tire if his search were vain.

"Hi!" suddenly cried Juan, turning toward Perez and brandishing the cane. "Hi!"

"What is it?" exclaimed Perez, springing from the stump on which he was seated.

"De Voodoo cane done find de minimature rite off!" replied old Juan, as he stooped and picked up something which the point of the cane had turned up.

It was the lost miniature.

CHAPTER XXVI.

OF THE MINIATURE.

"Give it to me," said Perez, advancing eagerly toward old Juan.

"For what I gib it to you, Josef?" replied Juan, who, though old, had a strong hand; and slipping the miniature into his pocket, he grasped the Voodoo cane with both hands and stood on his defence, speaking with all the rapidity of sudden indignation. "De Senor say he gwine reward liberally de one dat find de loss article. Juan find it. Juan gwine gib it to de Senor. Juan gwine to receib de reward. Stan' back, brown niggah! Ole Juan 'fraid ob nobody when he hab de Voodoo cane ob de great Syphaxo."

"Old man," said Perez sternly, "it is true that I am called Joseph now, but I am the same Raymundo whom you swore to obey when we first met, yonder in Havana, in the shop of Ruy Gomaza."

"Dat de troof, Josef," replied old Juan doggedly, "but I done repented ob dat swearin'. You see, you skeered me dat time—skeered me wid dem tricks I done seed you 'ceive de colored people hereabout wid. Can't fool ole Juan no mo' wid yer phosphoruses and yer blue fires, an' yer chewin' fire, an' all dem tricks. Nebber! Dis ole colored hidalgo see troo all dat now. You no true Voodoo, Josef. Juggler, dat what you is. You know heap 'bout de ways ob de true Voodoos, Josef, but de sperits nebber serbe you. You is a juggler, dat's all. You kin do wonderful things in de way ob trickin' de colored population, but you no mo', a true Voodoo dan de Senor am. When I swore dat oaf to you in de shop ob Massa Gomaza, I t'ought you war a true Voodoo, like de great Syphaxo. Now I know you is not. So I takes back dat oaf, I does. Hi! put hand on knife! Come on den! Wid dis cane, Juan 'fraid ob not'ing. I foun' de loss minimature, an' I gwine gib it to de Senor, caze I swored on de ches' ob de great Syphaxo to be faithful to de Senor."

"And you swore on that chest to be the dog of Sancho Perez."

"How you know dat?" exclaimed old Juan, in surprise. "But let dat pass, Josef. You war not dar at de time, an' Cappen Perez am not here. So I denies dat allergashun. Take care, Josef, how you fool 'round old Juan Olio, or he tell de Senor dat you a strange niggah, unknown to Juan till short time ago. What you speak ob Cappen Perez to me for, Josef? What I keer for Cappen Perez? He ober dar in Cuba. Ole Juan Olio here in Louisiana. I gwine stay in New Orleans de rest ob my life—"

"Diablos!" cried Perez, in his natural voice, and drawing his knife.

The drawing of the knife did not terrify old Juan. Confronted by one of his own color, the wiry old negro was as brave as a lion.

But the sound of the true and terrible voice of Sancho Perez, a man whom he mortally feared, startled the old man so that he nearly let fall the Voodoo cane.

He stared at Perez in a bewildered way for a long minute, and then conceiving a solution of the mystery, said defiantly:

"Oh, yes! You am a juggler, Josef! One ob dem dey call vankrillertwists! Whar you learn to imitate de voice ob Cappen Perez?"

"Caramba! I am Captain Sancho Perez!" replied Perez, in his true voice.

"Oh! de good Lor'!" gasped old Juan, recoiling from the voice.

"Listen, Juan. Do you remember the ragged tramp who gave you a real on the quay in Havana, and to whom you told the story of the deserted house, the young woman in the chest, and all that?"

"I does!" replied Juan, staring at Perez.

"Well, that man was Capt. Sancho Perez."

"De good Lor'!"

"That is, I!"

"De Lor' forgib ole Juan all he sins!"

"It was Baptiste the fruit-seller that collared you, Juan, in the pawnbroker's shop, and you believe he was I."

"O lordy!"

"And it was Captain Sancho Perez whom Gomaza sold to the Senor as Raymundo."

"You no hab de handsome face dat was de cappen's, when I tole him I war his cook Poncho!" stammered Juan, who began to fear that he was in the horror of a Voodoo incantation.

"Diablos! No! I lost all that in those accursed mines, Juan. But wait a moment. I will prove to you that I am a white man, and when that is done, you can have no doubt that I am Captain Sancho Perez," said Perez, taking a small bottle and a piece of sponge from his pocket.

He wet the sponge with some of the liquid that was in the bottle, bared his left arm to the elbow, drew the moist sponge over the dyed skin and then held his arm out for the inspection of Juan.

The passage of the sponge had removed the dark dye wherever it touched, and a long broad line of white skin met the stare of old Juan.

Then Perez drew aside the bosom of his coarse shirt, rubbed the sponge upon the stain with which his whole body was dyed—a stain which water could not affect—and so proved to Juan that his breast was that of a white man.

A few more remarks from Perez convinced the terrified and wondering negro that Captain Sancho Perez was indeed before him.

"Massa Cappen," asked the old man, when he had begun to regain a little courage, and while Perez carefully replaced the stain upon the spots from which he had just removed it, "what all dis for? Why you make brown niggah ob yoursel' an' let Massa Gomaza sell you to de Senor? Hi! Dat what puzzle dis colored hidalgo!"

"That is my secret, Juan," replied Perez sternly, so sternly that the old negro trembled again. "Remember your oath to me on the Voodoo chest, and never forget that if you tell any one that I am not a mulatto, I will kill you. I am, as before, Joseph, and I belong to Don Sebastian, or to Pére Dominique at present. I would kill you now, Juan, but for one thing. You swore on the Voodoo chest to be the dog of Sancho Perez—"

"Yeth, massa, yeth, massa, I did, an' I eber gwine to be faithful to dat oaf," Juan hastened to say.

"Therefore I spare you, and because you may be of service to me, Juan. Did he not whisper in your ear yonder in Havana, when you thought Baptista was I, in the pawnbroker's shop, that Sancho Perez would ever be near you?"

"Bress de Lor,' he did, an' I t'ought he war you, Massa Cappen."

"Then act as if you knew my eyes and my ears are ever near you, old man—and so they shall be, even when you may be sure in your own belief that I am far away—or my knife shall slip into your ribs—just there," said Perez, suddenly pricking the breast of Juan with the point of his long knife.

"Hab marcy, massa! Oh, spar' de ole man! Ki! dat fotch de blood!"

"And if I even suspect your faith to your oath, my knife shall split your heart, old man—or," said Perez, adding the menace of the fate most feared by all of Juan's race, "I will tie you to a tree and burn you alive. You must never let the secret out."

"I nebber will! I nebber will!" gasped Juan, now on his knees, for the voice of the savage convict filled his soul with terror.

"As for the miniature," continued Perez, "after I have seen it, and if I do not wish to keep it, you may give it to the Senor, and receive the promised reward. But if I shall desire to keep the miniature, you must not permit him to suspect that it has been found."

"He shall nebber be tole by me, Massa Cappen."

"Very well. Now give the miniature to me, and I will soon tell you whether I desire to keep it or not."

Juan at once drew the miniature from his pocket, and gave it to Perez.

Perez received it in the palm of his hand, with the face downward. Therefore his eye first fell upon the back of gold, and for a moment rested there, attracted by the inscription.

A Saint Andrew's Cross, formed of small diamonds and set in gold in the centre of the back, was encircled by an engraved inscription in Russian characters.

Perez, who had learned to read Russe in the mines, readily deciphered this inscription, which, in English, was as follows:

"Ivan Antonovitch, to his Czarina Sediassa."

The imperial arms of Russia, quartered with those of the Prince of Mecklenburg, were also engraved on the golden shield.

Perez did not pause at the moment to reflect who Ivan Antonovitch was, or he would have remembered that such was the name of once the rightful heir of the Russian throne, who, imprisoned by Elizabeth the Empress, daughter of Peter the Great, in 1741, while he was an infant, was murdered in 1763 in the Castle of Schusselberg, doubtless at the command of the Empress Catherine II., who feared the young prince might be placed upon that throne which she, Catherine, had gained by murdering her husband, Peter III., in 1762.

These historical facts did not occur to the mind of Perez, as he read the above inscription. Having read it, he turned the miniature over in his hand and looked at the face.

Old Juan, who had continued to stare at Perez in a wild and dreamy way, was so terrified by the actions of the latter, the instant after Perez had looked at the face of the miniature, that he fled into the hut forthwith, with marvelous speed for so old a negro.

No sooner had the gaze of Perez become fixed upon the picture, than he uttered a roar of wonder and delight, and exclaimed:

"It is Angelique! It is Angelique!" and began to leap and dance like a madman, pressing the miniature to his heart, to his lips, or holding it up toward the sky, and all the time uttering wild exclamations of the most rapturous joy and unbounded wonder.

Old Juan, who feared Perez had suddenly gone raving mad, and already holding the formidable convict in mortal terror, having gained the inside of the hut, closed the door, and peeped between the logs of which the hut was built.

"De cappen done gone clean mad!" thought the old negro. "What bite him? Someting done bite him, sure, or he no yell out like dat all ob a suddent! Got scorpion down he back, may be! How he dance 'round! What dat he say? It am angelic? What he mean? What he doin' now? Done put de minimature on a stump, an' he on he knees! Why, he 'pear like he am sayin' prayer to de minimature! He done Voodooed by dat minimature! dat 's it!"

Perez, to the great amazement of old Juan, had placed the miniature upon the slanting top of a stump, just as a religious devotee would place the image of his patron saint, and knelt before it, as if in silent adoration.

The fall of a dead branch of a tree, making a clatter and rustle among the dry leaves behind him, startled Perez from his ecstatic reverie, and he sprang to his feet in sudden alarm, snatching the miniature up at the same time and thrusting it into his bosom.

Having done this, he glared around wildly for a moment, with his knife drawn, as if resolved to die ere he should give up his prize.

"I was a fool," he muttered, after a moment's survey of the woods around. "Don Sebastian or Ivan might have surprised me in that posture, with the miniature before me. I must find some secluded spot where I shall be able to feast my eyes and soul without fear of interruption. Juan!" he added, in a loud voice.

"Dat me," replied old Juan, opening the door of the hut, and putting out his head. "What matter dar, cappen?"

"Rascal, if you again call me captain, I will cut your tongue out!" replied Perez, advancing toward the hut.

"Josef all de time! Josef all de time!" cried old Juan, alarmed again.

"Remember that, old fool. Though I was a fool too, in permitting you to know me," said Perez. "I have half a mind to make sure of your silence with my knife."

"Don't kill de ole man, Massa—I mean—Josef! Spar de ole man," pleaded Juan, falling on his knees, for the convict glared ferociously at him. "Ole Juan swored on de Voodoo ches' to be always true to you; an' he gwine to be, Josef!"

The life of the old negro hung upon a hair, as it were, but finally Perez said, in a menacing voice:

"I will spare you, for I believe you will not break your oath; and besides, I may need your services. But take care!" Here he brandished his knife in the face of the trembling old negro. "If I see any cause to suspect, you die! You are to tell no one that I have the miniature. I am going to the city. Take care of my secret—and that includes your life."

Perez then sheathed his knife, and left old Juan to his reflections.

The convict was impatient to find a spot where he should have no fear of being seen while his eyes and soul should feast upon the beauties of that which had so unexpectedly fallen into his possession—the lifelike and perfect semblance of her whom in his heart, for twelve years, he had called his adored Angelique.

His whole frame quivered with a kind of ecstasy, as he held the miniature tightly clenched in the hot palm of his great and bony right hand, while with his left he thrust aside the dense and tall undergrowth of the swamp, as he moved rapidly in the direction of the spot he desired to reach.

It was a lonely spot, about midway between the hut in the woods and the end of the great field in the rear of the Varlville gardens. Perez had found it one day as he sought for it during his rambles after they had begun to use the old hut. He had sought for the spot because he had seen a double tragedy enacted upon it when he chanced to be near it, twenty years before. It was an island of beautiful grass in a sea of huge cypresses, whose lofty tops hung over it like a canopy on every side—a spot of sylvan beauty in the heart of the swamp that lay between the Varlville premises and the hut in the woods.

Half an hour's march at a striding pace carried Perez to this oasis of the swamp. It was a perfectly level area about fifty yards in diameter, and circular in shape, with no growth upon it but short and densely growing grass; so that it looked much like a rich velvet carpet of the deepest green. The Spanish moss drooped in heavy gray festoons a hundred feet long from the tall giants of the swamp forest which stood in gloomy grandeur around this verdant circle, and Gothic aisles made by Nature's hand, amid the trunks of stately trees, and their multitudinous adornings of mosses and creepers and vine foliage, led off into the gloomy and silent recesses of the swamp on every side.

There was no sound there, save the mystic moanings of the unseen spirits of the swamp.

As Perez emerged upon this spot from a mass of undergrowth at one of its sides, a white crane rose like a sheeted spectre, swift and silent, and flew away; and a single deer, that had been feeding on the grass, bounded away with a sharp sniff of surprise at this human intrusion upon a spot rarely visited by the hunter.

"Here," muttered Perez, as he advanced to the centre of the spot, and threw himself upon the soft grass, "here I can spend an hour and more—all day if I like—in gazing at her face. Here, in the heart of the swamp, alone with Angelique, as it were—as my imagination shall frame my thoughts—alone with her! with my adored Angelique—for surely this portrait is the portrait of my Angelique!"

Lying upon his breast, he placed the miniature upon the grass, and supporting his head with the palms of both hands, and his elbows resting upon the ground, he abandoned himself to reveries over the picture.

As his enraptured eyes studied the beauteous lineaments so superbly depicted by some exquisitely skilled artist, he did not fail to detect that the face wore a more joyous and far more youthful expression than the face of Angelique as he remembered that glorious face.

"She was younger when this was painted," he reflected, "than when I saw her in Smolenski's cottage—much younger. She seems but fifteen or sixteen here in the miniature. She must have been more than twenty when I saw her in Smolenski's cottage, yonder in San Domingo. There is nothing but love and youth and beauty and joy in this painted face. There was care as well as beauty in the living face I saw. But this is undoubtedly a portrait of my Angelique—of the woman whose image, as I remembered it, I have adored for years—whose image cheered my slavery in the accursed mines. Yes," he said aloud, so that another heard him, "yes, it is Angelique! Yes, yes, it is Angelique!"

And it was at this moment that Leon de Vargas, bending over him, after creeping upon him as we have told, heard those words.

And now for what passed between Sancho Perez, the disguised convict, and Leon de Vargas, one of the grandsons of Madame Varlville.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

SHAWLS AND SWEETHEARTS.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"Dear me! I never was so puzzled in my life! Harry, *do* help me. Which do you think the prettier? Mamma cannot decide any better than I. Two days ago, she declared nothing could be more elegant than this one. Yesterday she was not so sure about deciding on my keeping it, because the exquisite fineness of the other one rendered it rather more desirable. To-day they are both so beautiful she cannot say which she admires the most. Now what shall I do? I declare I am really ashamed of myself! I am sure Mr. Goodman will think I am a very troublesome customer. I've exchanged first one for the other, I would not like to tell how many times. And now I have both here, I am just as much undecided as ever."

Mrs. Morton's usually bright face wore a sadly perplexed look as she turned her eyes appealingly on her husband.

"Oh, Nellie, love, *do* clear your brow! You look as if you had the care of a nation on your mind, instead of the purchase of a lace shawl. Now tell me the merits of each, and I will give you the benefit of my opinion."

The hall bell sounding just then caused a pause in the conversation, and a few moments after the servant entered, presenting a card.

Mrs. Morton, glancing at it, said:

"Oh, Mr. and Mrs. Nelson. I think their call quite opportune. I shall bring them in here, and get their opinion too. They have both excellent taste."

"Yes; and in a multitude of minds we may find wisdom enough to decide the weighty matter," Harry Morton said, laughing, as his wife hastened to her friends.

A few moments after, Nellie returned with Mr. and Mrs. Nelson. After a cordial greeting, Harry entered into a humorous description of his wife's and mother-in-law's perplexity concerning the shawl.

Nellie listened quietly for some time, until Harry's account of the frequent receiving and returning of the shawl, and the imaginary conversation between Mr. Goodman and his clerks on the subject, getting a little too ludicrous for her to bear very amiably, she exclaimed, with great disgust:

"Come, Mrs. Nelson, we will go up into mamma's room, and talk with her about this matter. Harry seems determined to turn it into ridicule."

"No, no, Nellie; I humbly crave pardon. I could not help indulging in my ruling propensity, particularly when I had so good a subject. Call mamma, and then we will enter into a grave consideration," said Harry, trying to keep back his smiles.

"I know very well you are almost dying to say a *man* could decide *all* subjects, great or small, without calling in all his relatives, connections and friends to assist him!" said Nellie, with a rueful countenance, giving Harry a sly pinch.

"Well, dear, you have said it for me. I shall only add, all subjects, from the selection of a wife to the purchase of a pair of boots. But, to be sure, he may be *pinched* by his choice," answered Harry.

"Oh, indeed, Harry, you are too provoking."

"Never mind, Mrs. Morton. I'm going to tell Harry a little story, to prove a man cannot always make a selection even of a wife without getting some friend's assistance," said Mr. Nelson.

"Why, you do not mean to say a man, or *the* man, could not tell which woman he loved the best, do you?"

"Indeed I do, Morton. Now, Mrs. Morton, if you will call your mother, I will proceed with my story."

Nellie's mother soon joined them, and Mr. Nelson began.

"My friend—we will call him Charles Barnard—had reached the age of thirty-five, and still remained unmarried. Some of his friends declared him a confirmed old bachelor, with no tender feeling for the fair sex; others, that in his youth he had loved and been disappointed. This was true in part. He was betrothed to a lovely girl, who died a few weeks previous to the time appointed for their marriage. Charley remained true to her memory for twelve years; and indeed I believe he would have continued so for life, had not accident thrown him in the way of one whose resemblance to his first love was very striking. His profession as a physician carried him to visit a clergyman, who had long been suffering from some chronic disease. Doctor Barnard could do nothing more for him than several others whose advice had been sought, only afford him temporary relief.

"However, the invalid at his first interview conceived a warm regard for the doctor, which, proving mutual, ripened into a sincere friendship. There it was Charley met the lovely girl who reminded him so much of the one he had lost. May was truly beautiful and charming in every way, but not less so was her sister Blanche, who was two years younger.

"About a year after, Doctor Barnard having visited them daily during the time, their father died, leaving his loved ones to the care of his friend.

"The little family, mother and daughters, placed the greatest confidence in, and consulted the doctor upon all business arrangements and matters of importance.

"Up to this time, whether the doctor had really decided upon marrying, I cannot tell; but rumor declared that May was his choice, and even told of a speedy union.

"A younger brother, William Barnard, coming home from a European tour about that time, was introduced by the doctor to the lovely sisters. After visiting them for several weeks, during which time he had tried in vain to determine which his brother really loved, adopting the views of Madam Rumor, he said:

"'Well, Charley, when are you going to be married?'

"'Married! Who said I was going to be married at all?' answered Charles, looking very innocent of any such design truly.

"'Who? Why, everybody,' William replied.

"'Indeed! And who to, I'd like to know?'

"'Now, Charley, I declare you are verdant if you suppose you can visit a lady for eighteen months, and folks not know it. Everybody says and expects you to marry May, of course,' William said.

"'Well, I *do* love May dearly, better than anybody in the world, except Blanche—'

"'Blanche? Charley, you love her? You will marry her?' William asked, with manifest anxiety.

"'Yes, I love Blanche. But—well, not better than May. That is, I don't think I do. Now, Will., just stop staring at me, as if you thought me *non compos mentis*, and I will tell you the truth of the matter. When I first saw May, I loved her more for another's sake than her own. Afterward her intelligence, wit, sprightliness, and general loveliness so won upon me that I was really on the point of offering her my hand and heart, when Blanche came home from visiting her relatives. Now, Will., you know yourself you cannot tell which is the more beautiful. Well, with Blanche's blue eyes, so full of gentle, lovely light, looking into mine, I was not so certain I loved the bright, flashing, black eyes enough to lose the blue ones.'

"'Pshaw, man. I should think you were old enough to know your own mind. Besides, what are eyes, or the color of them? It is the woman, her mind and heart,' interrupted Will. impatiently.

"'Just so, Will. But don't break in again until I tell you all about it. I adore May, because she is so full of energy, enthusiasm, and noble impulses. She does me good, helps me in every way. She is just the woman for a physician's wife. Yes, I *do* think I will go, tell May I love her, and ask her to be mine,' Charley then said, jumping up, and putting his hand on his hat.

"'That's right, old fellow! I am so glad you have decided. You will be much happier, I know,' said Will., grasping his hand.

"You may have seen that Will. was very much interested in the subject, and *very* anxious to secure May as a sister. You can imagine where he was drifting. But Charley did not suspect at all.

"An hour passed, during which time Will. still sat in the office, his mind busy planning a happy future, which was suddenly interrupted by Charley's return.

"'What, back so soon?' exclaimed Will. 'Am I to congratulate you?'

"'Oh no.'

"'No? Not rejected, I hope,' said Will., with an anxious face.

"'No, not so bad as that. I'll tell you. As I was nearing the house, indeed had gotten right opposite, I beheld, seated at the window, Blanche. Her face, resting on her hand, had such a sad, sweet look—she was in deep thought—that I felt like going right to her, telling her how much I loved, and trying to cheer her sadness. The gentle, darling girl!'

"'Well, Charley, you are enough to try the patience of a saint. I've been waiting here, expecting your return with the best of all news, happy as a man can be, and instead—'

"'Never mind, Will.,' said Charley.

"But Will. did mind. He was more disappointed than he cared to let his brother know.

"'You see, Will., a man must not be in a hurry about such things,' continued Charley.

"'If you mean about determining which of two girls a man loves, *I* think he ought to be in a hurry,' Will. said.

"'But I love *both*. I'm going to tell you how I feel now. Instead of having May, to inspire me to greater and better deeds, and nerve me to work on for the good of my fellow-men, I want, when I return home at night, wearied with hard work, to *rest*—to be loved, soothed, comforted, rested. Dear little Blanche is the one to give me this: to rest my head on her bosom, and have her caressing little fingers smoothing my brow, toying with my hair—

"'What the thunder is the matter with you?' exclaimed Charley suddenly, stopping and gazing on Will., who, during his brother's description of his feelings, had winced considerably. At last it grew more than he could stand, and starting up, overturning the chair, he began to pace the floor.

"'What *is* the matter, Will.?'

"'The matter *will* be brain-fever, if I remain here with you. You are enough to give it to any one,' answered Will.

"'Oh! really, Will., you ought to pity my condition, sympathize with me, and not get out of temper—'

"'I'll get out of town this very afternoon, hoping when I get back again, you will have decided which you are going to ask to be your wife.'

"And true to his word, Will. left, to visit some relatives in a neighboring town. Returning after an absence of ten days, and finding Charley, he asked the question, the answer to which was so important to himself.

"'Well, Charley, how is it? Have you made up your mind, and won your love?'

"'No. May has been away for a week; just returned, two days ago. Really I felt perfectly sure Blanche was the one I loved above all in the world, and I was determined to tell her so. That very day *May* came home. I never felt until that evening how much she was to me. What a noble girl she is! I—yes, I *think*, to-night I'll settle the matter!'

"'Do so, Charley. I think myself May *is* the one for you.'

"'Yes. But—O dear!—sweet, gentle Blanche. How *can* I give her up? Oh, Will., pity, help me!'

"'I vow I will!' answered Will., starting up, catching his hat, and opening the door.

"Just then a gentleman came in in great haste, and carried Charley off. So the brothers did not meet again until the next morning, when Charley said:

"'Now, Will., what can you do to help me in my dilemma?'

"'I've settled the affair for you,' Will. answered, his whole face expressing his great satisfaction.

"'Settled! How?'

"'Why, you have no longer a choice. Blanche is my promised wife,' Will. said exultantly

"'Will., old boy, is it really so? Did you ask her? Does she love *you*? Is this the truth? You know you love her?' Charley said, looking the very picture of agreeable surprise.

"'Yes, to all questions.'

"And before Will. could say another word, Charley's arms were about him, clasping him to his heart, exclaiming:

"'Oh, Will., you are the dearest, best, jolliest brother that ever lived! Hurrah! I cannot tell you how glad I am!'

"And releasing Will. for a moment, he rubbed and clapped his own hands, then caught Will.'s, and shook them until the poor fellow cried out for mercy.

"'Happy? I'm the happiest fellow alive, Will.! I know *now* it is May I've loved all the time. But, you see, I could not bear the thought of losing Blanche. Now my brother having her is the next thing to having her myself. Both of the dear girls in the family; that will be happiness, sure enough. Now, you see, when I want rest, and so on, I can come to Blanche—'

"'Yes; and she will provide you with a comfortable chair, and a pillow to rest your weary head upon; while for your tangled locks I'll endeavor to find a comb, instead of my wife's fingers,' Will. replied, with a merry laugh.

"'Oh, you rascal! But I will not quarrel, you have made me so happy,' Charley exclaimed, again grasping his brother's hand.

"It is needless to add that in a few weeks there was a double wedding. And there is not a happier man living than Doctor Charley—excepting your humble story-teller—notwithstanding some one else decided for him the all-important question."

"But you have not told us how happy Will. was," said Nellie.

"I think I did," Mr. Nelson said, his wife breaking into a merry little laugh.

"No. Oh! now I believe I comprehend. Is it possible you are—"

"Just so, madam. Here, at your service, are the Blanche and Will. of my story—two living witnesses of the truth thereof. Now, Morton, I think you will stop teasing your wife about her wavering between the shawls," Mr. Nelson said.

"Really, Nelson, your story needs living witnesses," said Harry. "But thanks, for its telling has decided the important question agitating Nellie's mind. Like the doctor, she cannot make up her mind to give up either; so we will keep them both in the family. And as a peace-offering, I will give one to Nellie, the other to mamma; hoping the latter will be rather more generous with the object of her admiration than the Will. of your story, and permit hers to comfort Nellie, and rest on her shoulders too."

WILD DUCK.

BY DOROTHY DALE.

The Lees of Long Beach were a prosperous race. The Lee farm was a goodly heritage, and its broad, fertile acres had come down from father to son, through one generation after another, since the first Peter Lee, who was not far behind the *Mayflower*, hewed the logs for his cabin, and set up his rough little tabernacle in the wilderness. Years after, another Peter Lee dug from his own quarry the pale gray stone of which he built the house that stands to-day on the very spot where Peter the first planted his rude log hut. True, the house has grown somewhat, and so has the farm. East, west and north fresh acres have been added; but on the south the ocean long ago set up boundaries which even such thrifty stock as the Lees are not likely to encroach upon.

There had been doctors, lawyers and ministers in the family, but always a Lee to live on the old homestead, and feel in doing so that the lines had fallen to him in the very pleasantest of places. Young Peter, the present heir apparent, had finished his college course, and had come home from digging among mouldy Greek roots to work in more modern soil. He was a well-favored youth, tall and broad-shouldered, like most of the men of his race, and had the ruddy complexion, brown hair, and wide-open, merry brown eyes of that ancestral Peter who built the old stone-house and left his portrait on the high mantel which crowned the huge old fireplace in the best room.

Young Peter, without any great amount of vanity, still thought moderately well of himself—as young men not infrequently do—looked upon the Lees as the salt of the earth, and considered that to be Peter Lee of Long Beach was as good a situation in life as he felt disposed to ask for. His father and mother were just in the prime of life, his sister Lina was a bright, sweet, good-tempered girl, and altogether his home was so well-ordered and happy that he had, as yet, given small thought to the idea of adding to its attractions by bringing there a wife of his own. A young bachelor with a light heart and a heavy purse, he thought, need be in no hurry about "the knot there 's no untying;" and though he intended one of these days to settle down for life and follow in the footsteps of his father, still he meant to be young Peter for many a day yet, free to come and free to go.

But when his sister's dearest friend, Mollie Henderson, came down to the Beach for a month's visit, the wind suddenly shifted, and soon blew strong from the opposite quarter. Mollie, with her fair hair and her dark eyes, that were soft as a dove's at one moment and flashing with fun the next, her pink dimple-dotted cheeks, and her red lips that, whether they smiled or pouted, always looked distractingly sweet, took the heart of our Peter quite by storm. She had not been in the house three days before he declared to himself that he had never seen such a taking girl in all his life, and at the end of a week our contented young bachelor, who had meant to have his fling and to take his own time about it before putting himself under conjugal bonds, had made up his mind that he should be the happiest man alive if Mollie Henderson would but consent to become Mrs. Peter Lee.

Peter did not neglect his opportunities, you may be sure. He made himself useful and agreeable with all his might, whenever he had the chance, and after the first fortnight of Mollie's visit, was continually engaged in setting traps for opportunities, meaning at the very first one to make an irresistibly eloquent offer of his hand, his heart, etc.—whatever may be customary on such interesting occasions.

But Mollie was dreadfully shy of "opportunities." She knew well enough what Peter wanted, the bright little puss, who had seen other young men in a similar state of mind; but Mollie was like the butterflies, fluttering in the sunshine, and finding such sweet honey in the flower-cups where she sipped, that she had no mind to fold her wings thus early in the day. She had no occasion to be on the look-out for a settlement in life, and cared not a rush for all the fat acres of the Lee farm; and though she occasionally told herself that Peter was very nice and she liked him very much, and if Peter should really ask her, she would not like to say No, still she was "too light of heart and gay of wing" to want to be caged just yet.

And so it fell out that though the young people walked and boated and drove, and strolled about together in every imaginable way, Peter still set his bait and sprung his traps in vain for an opportunity. If he asked Mollie to take a walk on the beach, she would always have to go for her hat or her scarf, or some other indispensable article; and when she came back, Lina was sure to be with her. If they rode on horseback, Mollie was as capricious as the butterflies we have likened her to, and being liable at any moment to start off on a wild scamper at the top of her horse's speed, Peter wisely concluded that he should find it awkward to begin his love-tale and be thus left, with his declaration in his mouth, to follow at his leisure.

One day, having discovered that large flocks of wild ducks were rapidly making their appearance, Peter forthwith determined upon a sporting excursion, and went accordingly to lay his proposition before the girls. They were nowhere to be found, however, and Peter strolled out into the orchard under the apple-trees; and finally, thinking he would go down to the water and take a look at his boat, he came up behind the old moss-covered bathing-house just in time to see the girls trip out on to the beach in their pretty gray and scarlet dresses. Lina was used to the water, and plunging in, swam about as though she had been born and brought up in that element; but Mollie pattered about upon the soft sand with her little white feet, poked her toes into the water, and hopped back shivering and squeaking, then edged cautiously in, a little way at a time; and at last, having taken a very long breath, and shut her mouth and her eyes so tight that not a drop of water could possibly squeeze through either, she plunged in, and came up again all dripping and gasping, but pink as a rose "just washed in a shower." And Peter forgot his boat, and walked up to the house, smiling all over his ruddy, sunburnt face, and humming softly to himself:

"O, my Luve 's like a red, red rose
That 's newly sprung in June!
O, my Luve 's like the melodie
That 's sweetly played in tune!
As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry."

By which it will appear, to those who are familiar with the symptoms of Peter's malady, that he was very far gone indeed.

The plan for the duck-shooting excursion was received with enthusiasm on all sides, and at two o'clock on the afternoon of the next day, Peter shouldered his gun, slung his shot-pouch across his back, and the party took their places in the gallant little boat which lay waiting for them with impatiently fluttering sails, like a sea-gull longing to spring away and be off on its snow-white wings. There were the two girls, an aunt of the young Lees, and Peter, with old Stephen Gray to sail the boat; and they were as merry a party as though powder and shot had never done cruel mischief, and there was not the remotest possibility of the excursion ending in their being quartered in Davy Jones' locker.

The strong, crisp autumn breeze was like champagne to the spirits of the young sailors; bluer waves never danced and sparkled in brighter sunshine; ducks flew screaming and squawking to right and left, and Peter's gun banged away, emptying its two barrels as fast as he could reload; the ladies, young and old, at each shot doing their bounden duty *as ladies*, in the matter of shrieks and appropriate exclamations of the usual variety; but still nothing came of it—at least, no ducks. The unaccommodating creatures persisted in making too free use of their wings, and Peter at last, feeling a little mortified at his want of success, and being too good a sportsman to be willing to go home with nothing to show for his afternoon's powder and shot, proposed that he should be left to try his luck on a little seven by nine heap of earth and rocks which the low tide had left above water, while the remainder of the party sailed about at a safe distance. But the wee little island suddenly became possessed of strong attractions for the two girls, who forthwith decided that it would be exceedingly romantic to be left on that tiny speck in the midst of the water. Of course their coaxing was not to be resisted, and they landed with Peter.

The boat was just pushing off again when the possibilities of the situation flashed upon the mind of our hero, and he immediately whispered in the ear of his sister:

"Get back into the boat, Lina, quick! Ah, do, Lina! that 's a dear!"

And Lina, good-natured, and without a moment to think about it, jumped into the boat, and with a merry laugh and a wave of her handkerchief, floated off with the rest of the party as fast as their sails full of wind could carry them, while Mollie went hopping about unsuspiciously among the rocks, exploring the shores of their baby island.

"Lina gone! What does this mean?" cried Mollie, her face all in a blaze of wrath, the moment she discovered the trick which had been played upon her.

The beautiful little Fury looked rather fierce for wooing, but Peter was not going to be faint-hearted at this crisis, and plunged valiantly *in medias res*.

"It means, Mollie, that I wanted the chance to tell you how much better I love you than all the world besides."

"Then, sir, I'll improve the chance to tell *you*, that if you could say this to me in no more manly way than by first getting me in a trap like this, you had better not have said it at all."

"Now, Mollie, don't be unreasonable. You know you would never let me speak for myself, unless I chose to do so across the dinner-table, or in some other equally private place; so you can't be vexed, I'm sure, since my only chance was in cornering you."

"But I tell you I *am* vexed, and I don't choose to be cornered." And Mollie's red lips made themselves up into a most tempting little pout.

"Do pray, Mollie, forgive the trap, if you will call it so," begged penitent Peter. "I'm sure I ask your pardon for it with all my heart."

"Oh, I'm not going to forgive it quite so readily as that," returned Mollie. "And now, if you please, you can go on with your duck shooting. I shall not disturb you."

She was turning loftily away when Peter seized both her hands, and with real pain and disappointment in his honest face, exclaimed:

"Mollie, is that really all you have to say to me?"

"Yes, all!" and freeing herself, Mollie marched away with a very tragic step, as far as the limited extent of dry land would permit.

She sat down upon a rock; Peter soon took up a corresponding position on his end of the island, and there they remained like a pair of dumb statues, each on its pedestal, while ducks flew by unshot, and the sun hid himself behind a huge black cloud, and the fair breeze changed to a stiff gale, setting here and there a white cap among the waves.

Suddenly Peter leaped from his rock, as though his gun, lying idly beside him, jealous of his neglect, had fired off a shot on its own responsibility. "Good heavens! What is the matter?" he exclaimed, staring out upon the water; and Mollie was at his side in a twinkling, that precise spot being probably the only eligible point of view from the island.

Three miles off at the very nearest, but not yet out of sight, their boat lay helpless on its side, its sails flapping the waves, and its three occupants clinging with might and main to the uppermost side, still out of the water. There are no boats in sight to come to the rescue. How long can they hold out, in that perilous position, against the buffeting of the merciless wind and the surge and swash of the roaring waves?

Peter groans as he looks in vain over the waste of waters for a friendly sail, and Mollie covers her eyes with her hands in terror. The slow minutes, each one big with direst danger, pass like ages, until at last, far off in the dim distance, a vessel heaves in sight, comes nearer and nearer, catches sight of the capsized boat, and the distress signals fluttering from it, and sends relief. The small boat that puts off from the vessel's side tosses like a cockle-shell on the rough waves, but the rowers are strong, and the whole party soon stand in safety on the schooner's deck.

There is time now for Peter and Mollie to think of themselves—to shudder at the fast rising tide—to watch the huge, foaming waves, as they break further and further up each moment over the doomed little island, and to calculate how long those hungry waves will wait for their prey. A little while—not long enough for a score of billows to roll and break—and there is no longer dry land to stand upon. Mollie's face is white and pitiful with fear as Peter helps her up to the highest rock, and stands, pale too and silent, beside her. The cold spray breaks over them; the chilliness of despair comes with the rough splash of a cruel wave that climbs half way up to their last refuge.

"Peter," Mollie said at length, with a faint sob that was lost in the breakers, "I am sorry for what I said to you. I was angry. I didn't mean it."

"Then, Mollie, you forgive me for forcing you to listen to what I wanted to say to you?"

"Yes. O, yes!" said Mollie. "And Peter—I—I—"

"Do you love me, Mollie?"

"Yes, Peter, I do," sobbed Mollie, the tears rolling down her cheeks; and, with all her coyness gone, she lay folded tight in Peter's arms, while the waves dashed higher and higher, and no help came.

The schooner had put about, and was coming slowly toward them, but she was far away, and the wind dead against her, and nothing could stay that cruel tide. A great flock of ducks flew by—happy creatures, *they* had wings. Then came a gun-shot—another and another—and a small sail-boat was seen bounding over the waves in full chase. Peter made a trumpet of his two hands, and roared through it like a raging lion, while Mollie swelled the volume of sound with all the might of her highest treble.

They are heard; hats are waved in answer; the little boat changes her course, tacks, plunges bravely ahead, and coming as close as possible to the rocks, Peter seizes the rope flung out to him, and with Mollie fast in his arms, struggles through the surging waves, and they sit at last side by side in the boat, looking back with grateful hearts upon their dangerous perch.

Another hour, and the little party, having come safely through all their perils, were united once more at home, and the entire household was in a state of brisk and bustling confusion on their account.

But when evening came, and the whole family were gathered around a blazing fire on the hearth, then the rescued mariners—as they styled themselves—were in their glory. They talked fast and long over their adventures, each one contributing some thrilling variation, until Mr. Lee asked:

"Peter, how many wild ducks did you bring down after you took to your island?"

"Just one, sir," answered Peter, with a sly glance at Mollie, who flushed, and then fluttered a little, as became her in the new rôle assigned to her.

But Mr. Lee, not understanding the system of telegraphy adopted by the young people, continued his inquiries:

"You didn't succeed in bringing your duck home with you, I imagine?"

"Indeed I did though!" And the joyfully triumphant Peter then and there took possession of his prize, adding, "And, father, my wild duck has promised to take me for her mate, and make her nest with us."

THE MAID OF JOHN'S CHOICE.

BY GEORGE W. BUNGAY.

One of the proper age,
Of a good lineage,
Handsome by heritage,
Eyes brown or blue.

All grace in her motion,
A heart of devotion,
A soul of emotion,
Noble and true.

Speech free, not bombastic;
Wit keen, not sarcastic;
A laugh that 's elastic,
Health to endure.

Trust unassumingly,
Hope that is humanly,
Pity that 's womanly,
Love that is pure.

Such a maid my wish is,
Her love how delicious!
O, fate, be propitious
Now unto me!

No soft sylph, no fairy,
No girl vain and airy,
No vixen contrary,
My wife shall be.

I 'd risk all the sorrow,
No trouble I 'd borrow;
I 'd marry to-morrow
The girl I love.

Love comes and tarries,
Faith the load carries,
When love with love marries,
Looking above.

THE RIVAL SISTERS.

By **ELIZA A. DUPUY,**

AUTHOR OF THE "EVIL GENIUS," THE "WHITE TERROR," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

HESTER'S PLOT DEEPENING.

The morning air was soft and delightful; the sun was shining through the hazy mist of Indian summer, and Mrs. Oliver had a very pleasant walk on the wide grass-grown embankment which prevents the encroachments of the mighty Father of Waters on the low lands at the season of high water.

When a few hundred yards from the gate, Marion saw a tall woman walking in the road below her, with her head bent down and her hands clasped together, as if struggling with some powerful emotion that threatened to master her. A second glance showed her that it was Zulieme, and wondering what had happened to cause her to wear so disconsolate an aspect, she paused and called to her.

The woman raised her head, and rather reluctantly approached.

"Is anything wrong at home, that you look so unhappy and so much excited, Zulieme?"

"Nothing 's wrong wi' white folks, but something 's always goin' wrong with them as can't help theirselves," said the woman almost fiercely. "If anybody had told me that *I'd* be sent away from the place that I has always lived on, I wouldn't ha' b'lieved it; but it 's true all the same, Mrs. Oliver."

"But why is that? You must have misunderstood—"

"No, I didn't, ma'am, as you 'll soon find out. Miss Estelle an't no more like she used to be than a—than a dove is like a hawk. She swooped down on me this mornin', an' tore my heart as cruelly as the hawk does a chicken. She don't want me 'bout her no more, an' she 's goin' to send me and my boy away."

Zulieme then told Marion how she and her son Gabe were to be sent to live with her and Mr. Spencer at New Orleans. Marion was surprised, but soothed the poor creature as well as she could, saying:

"I shall certainly be the gainer, and I promise to try and make you comfortable and contented in your new home. But whither are you going now?"

"Only to a hollow under the levee, where I always goes when I 'm in trouble. The river seems to comfort me somehow, as I see it flowin' on an' on, ripplin' agin the snags, an' tryin' to tear 'em up by the roots. But it don't stop for 'em, it gits past 'em, an' goes shinin' on. I think them snags is like the troubles of life; they stand up dark and ugly enough, but the water rushes at 'em, foams up a little, an' then goes on as smooth as before. So it 'll be with me, I s'pose, if I will only have faith to believe that God doesn't forgit his dark children, though the sin of them that went afore 'em has laid such a heavy burden upon 'em."

Mrs. Oliver was deeply touched by the woman's words, and went back to the house determined to do something for her. After taking off her hat and shawl, she went to Hester's door and tapped for admittance.

She found her engaged with letter writing, and would have retired, but Hester said, with a faint smile:

"Sit down, if you please, Marion, for I am weary of solitude, and tired of thinking on painful subjects. I have just written to Mrs. Walton, thanking her for her kind letter, and expressing my deep regret that I did not visit Newport before I left the North. If I had dreamed that my aunt would take my apparent neglect so much to heart, I would have set aside my father's wishes, and have gone to her. It is hard that I must bear a life-long regret because my tender regard for his memory made me tenacious of the dying injunctions of my only parent."

"Since you did what you thought for the best, Estelle, you should not take too much blame to yourself for what has happened to Mrs. Murray. She was a great sufferer, I have been told, and the change to her must be a happy one, for she was prepared to enter the Father's kingdom."

"Yes, she was a good Christian woman, and her affection for Clarice and myself was the only tie that bound her to life. Let us speak no more of her, for the very thought of what has happened oppresses me. Tell me something to put all this out of my head. You have been out walking. Who did you see? You look as if you have something to say to me."

"I took a long walk, but I saw no one as I went except plantation laborers. As I returned, I met Zulieme looking very much depressed, and if I have anything to say, it is of her."

A sudden look of anger came into Hester's eyes, and she almost sharply asked:

"Has she dared to make a complaint to you? It would not surprise me if she did, for it would only be on a par with the rest of her impertinence. I'll tell you why I send her away."

She was now speaking in a rapid and excited tone, assumed for a purpose of her own, and her companion regarded her with surprise which deepened into horror when Hester told her how Zulieme's mother poisoned Mr. Landry's first wife, and she said:

"This is terrible. Are you certain of it, Estelle? Such a thing should not be credited without proof."

"The woman confessed it on her death-bed. How my father learned it, I need not tell you. I am sure that Zulieme is a good woman, and he was just enough not to visit her mother's sin on her; but I am differently constituted. I cannot have one near me every day who is so nearly related to the murderess. She will be faithful to you, Marion, and I ask you, as a favor, to take her and her son away with you when you go. I cannot sell them without giving a reason, and you can understand how much I shrink from having that old story brought up and talked over again."

"I understand your feelings, and will write to Herbert, and let him know your wishes. Of course I can do nothing without his concurrence, but I think he will be only too glad to secure such capable servants."

As soon as Mrs. Oliver had left the room, Hester muttered:

"I have managed that well, and I shall soon be rid of all three of them, thank Heaven! That ought to be work enough for one day, but I must write to Julian Macon, and give the finishing stroke to his hopes, by apprising him of the previous marriage of the girl I so cleverly personate. It will be a sad blow to the poor wretch, but he will manage to live through it, I dare say. If he will only let *me* live without interference from him, I do not much care what happens to him. He may die of a blighted heart—'green and yellow melancholy' may claim him for her own; but what will that be to me when I am the gay and brilliant wife of Raymond De Lorme? Nothing—less than nothing."

She drew the paper toward her, and wrote a clear announcement of the discovery of the secret marriage, which she averred had just been made by her in a most unexpected manner. She described the false bottom to the trunk, and gave extracts from the journal she had found beneath it, which she felt assured must satisfy Macon that any attempt to make good his claims upon her must end in ruin to them both.

Hester did not express a single regret for the turn affairs had taken; she coolly stated facts, and left Macon to draw his own inferences from them. She referred to her early attachment to Raymond De Lorme as an excuse for her willingness to accept the position of his wife, and bade Macon have no fears as to her future happiness; she affected to believe that he thought of that before his own, and assumed that he would reconcile himself to that which was now inevitable, and not compromise her safety by attempting to put forward his claims.

The letter was a very labored production, and she was far from satisfied with it herself, but she found it impossible to make it different, if she would not kindle hopes which she could not now realize.

Laying it aside with an impatient expression, she dashed off the following lines to her mother:

"DEAREST: When you read this—when you have heard from Julian the anomalous, and in some respects, the terrible position in which I am placed—you will suffer deeply, I know. Nothing is left for any of us now but to submit to inexorable fate. I know how unselfishly Julian loves me, and I believe he will save me from ruin, even at the sacrifice of his own hopes. I rely on you and him to be true to me in this emergency, and I will not fail in doing all that is possible for both of you. To you, I will still be your child in affection and respect, and I have thought of a way to have you with me after my union with Raymond. It is this:

"I shall insist on travelling in Europe, and when once there, I will seek you out as a companion and friend. Under an assumed name, Ray will never recognize you, for you have changed much since those days on the plantation. Besides, he was but a boy then, and not a very observant one, and he saw very little of you, as our meetings were mostly in my evening promenades when you permitted me to go out for exercise.

"Trust to me to overcome every difficulty, for I could not live away from my darling mother.

"The large sum I have transferred to my half-sister as her dower, can be given to Dr. Macon *at her death.* If he has any consideration for *me,* he will take such steps as will make my marriage perfectly legal, and I expect him to prove his loyalty to me by doing so. Otherwise I shall believe that, in spite of all his professions, he thinks more of himself and his disappointment than of my interests or my safety.

"I rely on you, dear mother, to bring him to reason, and make him see how impossible it is for me to pursue any other course than the one I have taken.

"Things here have gone well with me. I have been accepted in good faith as the person I assume to be, and I have even had the *honor* to be kissed and wept over by my haughty mother-in-law. I shook with laughter while the farce was enacting, but as I concealed my face upon her maternal bosom, she thought I was as deeply moved as she appeared to be. I saw my father laid between *your two rivals,* and he sleeps as soundly as if no treason against their children and his was going on prosperously in this nether world.

"Mrs. De Lorme had letters lately from her son, and I am certain that he cannot be with us for several months yet, so there is time to *remove the obstacle in my path* before our public espousals can be celebrated. *None of us are safe while E. L. lives.* Act on my suggestion, and I will use every effort to bring about a reunion between you and myself. After all I have done, you cannot doubt my ability to accomplish the rest.

"Adieu, dearest mother. Never doubt my devotion to you, nor my firm determination to bring you to my side, and keep you ever near me.

"H. B. L."

Hester read over this performance, and was better satisfied with it than with the previous one. She muttered:

"The hope I have held out to her will satisfy her for the present, and induce her to act for my benefit. Why should I shrink from the sacrifice of that demented girl? It is necessary to the security of my future position, for I will not be the wife of Raymond De Lorme only in name. He shall be *mine* truly and lawfully; and afterward, even if discovery came, he could not repudiate my claims upon him, and his pride would prevent him from proclaiming to the world the deception that had been practised on him. If Macon does not act the idiot, I am safe—*safe.*"

With this triumphant conviction, Hester closed her letters, and addressed them. They were then placed in a larger envelope, directed to the fictitious Mrs. Caroline Linley, to be claimed by an agent of Macon's when they reached New York, and forwarded from there to their true destination.

After wrapping them in a strong paper, and further securing them by tying the package up, Hester summoned Gumbo to her presence. He always went to the post-office, and was responsible for the safe delivery of letters. When he came in, bowing lowly before her, she blandly said:

"Good-morning, Uncle Gumbo. I sent for you to tell you myself something that I think will please you. I have not forgotten how much my dear father was attached to you, and how highly he thought of your family as faithful servants. I have been casting about in my mind how I could show my own appreciation of your good qualities, and I have at last found a way to prove it to you. Your daughter, Sylvia, is a sensible and respectful woman, and I intend to give her the place of housekeeper now held by Zulieme; you may tell her to come in the house to-day, and learn from her all that will be necessary to enable her to fill the position before Zulieme goes away to New Orleans."

The mouth and eyes of the old negro opened to their widest extent, and he seemed too much bewildered by this announcement to understand it clearly. He stammered:

"I—I's very glad, Miss Estelle, ef my gal kin have justice did her; but—but she dunno much 'bout lookin' arter things, an'—an' I'd be sorry to have Z'lieme sent off to be sold. Yer pa never did that to any on his people, though I dar say many on 'em kisarved it. What 's *she* done, Missy, to 'fend you so much, that you 're goin' to put her on the auction block? It 's a orfle disgrace, an' one that 'll come nigh killin' sich a 'oman as Z'lieme."

"You misunderstood me, Uncle Gumbo. I have no intention of selling Zulieme. How could I, when you know that she nursed me tenderly when I was a helpless infant. I am only going to hire her and her son to Mr. Spencer for an indefinite period, as it is expedient, for many reasons, to send her away from this place. It is not necessary for me to explain; if you will appeal to your memory, you will comprehend why the daughter of Ellinor Landry shrinks from having near her one so closely allied to old Zelma."

The negro shivered, and a dull ashen hue spread over his black face. He huskily said:

"So-o—you has been tole *dat.* I didn't dar to speak on it myself, though *I* knowed it from what de marster said to me. You know, Missy, that I took keer on him when he were a little shaver, for I were old enough then to be trusted with him. I teached him how to ride, an' to shoot; an' when anything troubled him, he allers come to Gumbo to tell him on it, even to the last time he were on the plantation. Now that I knows *why* you won't have Z'lieme 'bout you, I don't wonder at you sendin' her away. I 's much obleeged on Silvy's account, an' I 'll sen' her up to onct to begin her new eddication. She 's spry, and willin to larn, an' I hopes you 'll have no cause to complain o' her."

"Your daughter will have ample time to learn the necessary routine, as Zulieme does not leave for several weeks yet. Of course you will be prudent enough not to speak of the reason I have given you for parting from my present housekeeper. It will be enough to say that Mr. Spencer is going to housekeeping, and my affection for his future wife induces me to let them take with them two competent servants from this place. It is my intention to let Gabriel accompany his mother."

"I 'll be very keerful, Miss Estelle, as I has allers bin 'bout *dat.* 'Tan't a thing to be spoke of, you know; an' I thanks you in Silvy's name for the 'sponsible place you 's gin her. I'm glad Gaby 's goin' with his mammy, for him and Silvy don't git on together, an'—"

"That is of no consequence to me," interrupted Hester, a little impatiently. "I have told you what I sent for you to hear, and I have no time to listen to gossip. Here is a package of letters which I wish mailed to-day. Where is your bag? I prefer seeing them safely in it myself."

"I never had sich a thing," growled the old man, offended at the tone in which she had spoken; "I has allers took things safe in my coat pocket, and nobody can 'cuse ole Gumbo o' losin' nothin' yit."

"That may be very true, but I am not going to have my letters carried in so careless a manner. Here is a satchel with a good spring; take this to carry mail matter to and fro, and remember that when it is brought to the house, it is to be sent to me first. No one is to presume to look into it before I do, for I do not like my letters overhauled by others."

The negro took the leather satchel she offered him, and slinging it on his arm, said:

"It 'll do better 'n the pocket mebbe, an' I 'll 'member what you 's said, Missy. I 'll go with your letters to onct, for it 's gittin late in the day, an' the packet comes down this arternoon. I 'll save the good news for Silvy till I come back, an' I'm monsous glad you thought o' my gal."

Gumbo, with another low salaam, left the room, and Hester threw herself back on the sofa to rest and think.

Later in the day Mrs. Oliver sought the library, which was in the wing of the house opposite to the conservatory. It was a long narrow room, the walls of which were lined with shelves filled with literary works in German, French and English. All the standard writers in each language were represented, and the books had evidently been read and enjoyed, for in nearly every volume Marion examined she found pencil marks and notes commenting on the text. There was a very wide window at each end of the apartment filled with tinted glass, and the front one commanded a fine view of the river. Two rooms opened from this which had been used as dormitories for single gentlemen, but they were now to be given up to the use of Miss Lyman and her young charge, and Zulieme, with a young house-maid, was setting them in order, and making such changes in the furniture as she found necessary.

As Marion was meditating on some passages she had read, Zulieme came in from the adjoining room, holding in her hand a square of Bristol board on which there was a pencil drawing, which she was regarding with an expression it was difficult to decipher.

When she saw Mrs. Oliver, she eagerly drew near her, and asked:

"Am I to go, or stay, ma'am? I couldn't speak to you afore without listeners; but what 's the use of askin', when I know beforehand what 's comin'?"

"I hope you will be able to content yourself with me, Zulieme, and I think you will eventually like the change that I believe is inevitable."

The woman put up her hand to shield her face from observation, and in suppressed tones said:

"I knowed it. There an't none of her mother's softness in her; an' ef it *could* be, I'd think—" She stopped suddenly, and uncovering her face, spoke in her natural voice. "I'm very foolish to care about going away from one who shows she has no love for me. I'd better be with you, Mrs. Oliver, bekase you wouldn't hurt my heart every day, an' I promise to be a good servant to you. Gaby 'll do his part, too, an' he 's glad enough to git away to a place where he can see something o' the world. Since I talked with him, I'm better reconciled."

"I am glad to hear it, for I wish every one in the new home to which I am going, to be as well contented as I expect to be."

The woman shook her head, with a faint smile.

"You can hardly expect *that,* Miss Marion, but I'll do my best."

"What is that you have in your hand?" asked Mrs. Oliver.

"It 's a picter young Mr. De Lorme drew a long time ago, an' it was hung agin the wall in the room I've been fixing for Miss Clarice. I didn't wan't *her* to be axing no questions 'bout it, so I brought it away."

She turned it toward Mrs. Oliver, and she saw that it was a spirited sketch of a child in the fangs of a large dog, with his teeth fastened on the curve of the shoulder. A youth was rushing toward them with a pistol in his hand, and an expression of wild horror on his face.

"That is Estelle," said Marion. "Did so terrible an accident really happen to her; and how did she escape?"

"No, ma'am, it 's not Miss Estelle, but the *other one.* When this happened, my young lady was safe at the North with her aunt. This," pointing to the child, "is Hagar Blake's daughter."

"And who is the youth? He is sketched in so lightly that I cannot be certain as to his identity."

"Young Raymond De Lorme. He used to come about here huntin', and that was a favorite dog of his'n. He used to jine Hester Blake in her walks, an' her mother let her go out to meet him every day, though she must have knowed that no good could come from their takin' a likin' to each other. His dog went mad, and flew at the gal one day, an' Mr. Ray had presence of mind to go up to him an' put his pistol to his head afore he fired. Then he brought her to the house in his arms, an' burnt out the place on her shoulder hisself. That was the last time they was together though, for when his mother heard of it she sent him off to college, an' soon arterward Mr. Landry brought his last wife to the place, an' afore she came, Mrs. Blake an' her daughter was sent away for good."

"The resemblance to Estelle is very striking. Were the two really so much alike?"

"Excep' for the difference in size, you couldn't have told 'em apart when they was children. When Mr. Ray came home for a holiday he drawed that, an' gave it to the master. I don't know why he vallied it, for the whole lot on 'em had only been a worry to him, an' I'm sometimes afeard that Hagar Blake was something wuss 'n that."

"Why should you think that?" asked Marion, with a penetrating glance.

Zulieme shook her head, and drearily said:

"I don't know nothin' certain, but there was strange talk 'mong the people on the place, an' they mixed up the name of one *I* don't believe guilty, in their whispers. It 's somethin' that ought not to be spoke of, Mrs. Oliver, an' I 'd rather not say any more 'bout it."

Marion respected her reticence, and she was glad to have the assurance that Zulieme refused to believe in the possibility of her mother's participation in the hideous crime laid to her charge. She only said:

"You are quite right, Zulieme, and I do not wish to pry into family affairs. That picture should no longer remain here; it is a very spirited sketch of a striking scene, and I shall be glad if you will give it to me."

"You 's quite welcome to it, Mrs. Oliver, for I didn't know exactly what to do with it."

At the moment it was offered to Mrs. Oliver, Zelma came in with a message for her aunt. Her eye fell on the picture, and with a broad grin, she asked:

"Who that the dog tearin'? Hi, Miss Estelle! an' it 's the same place whar—"

She stopped abruptly, remembering the injunction she had received not to speak of the scar she had seen on the shoulder of her mistress. In a bewildered manner she went on:

"I dunno what I 's talkin' 'bout. Uncle Gumbo wants you, aunty, an' he sent me to ax you to come to him."

Zelma effected her escape, followed by Zulieme, and Marion folded up her new acquisition in wrapping paper, and took it to her own room to place it where no prying eyes could rest on it.

CHAPTER XL.

PASSING THE ORDEAL.

Though devoured with anxiety as to the result of the first meeting between herself and those who were on their way to Le Bocage, Hester managed to maintain a calm exterior, and even at times to be cheerful, though the recent death of Mrs. Murray afforded her an excuse for melancholy.

As she looked from her window, a black cloud of smoke rising behind a bend in the river heralded the approach of a steamer which might have on board those whose arrival she so terribly dreaded.

"There, they are coming! I felt a presentiment that they were on that boat," she murmured with white lips.

In the mean time the gallant steamer dashed forward on her course, and it soon became evident that Le Bocage was the point at which a landing was to be effected. Hester made strenuous efforts to preserve outward calmness, but her hand trembled as she raised an opera-glass to her eyes, and scanned the group gathered on the bow of the steamer. Herbert Spencer was there, holding a young girl by the hand, and close behind him was another gentleman with a lady in his charge.

She turned to Marion and tried to speak playfully:

"Behold, your destiny approaches; and I—I am about to clasp to my heart once more the sister I so dearly love."

Her voice broke almost into a hysterical cry, for at this moment she felt as if the sword of destiny was losing its hold upon the single hair that sustained it above her head. For a moment she cowered before the ordeal that approached her, but feeling that in this important crisis she must control herself, she soon regained her clearness of perception, and was ready to play her part in the approaching scene.

Mrs. Oliver hurriedly asked:

"Shall we not walk down to the levee to meet them? or are you too much agitated to make the effort? You are looking very pale, Estelle."

"I feel that I am—I could not walk a hundred yards to save my life. Oh! Marion, much as I love Clarice, this meeting, after all that has happened, will be terrible to me. Do not be surprised if I break down, and fall into hysterical spasms. I try to be calm, but my heart—my heart feels as if it were breaking."

The emotion was perfectly genuine, though Mrs. Oliver could have no clue to its true origin. She called to Zelma, who was peeping out of the door, and ordered her to bring a glass of water to her mistress.

After drinking a small portion of it, Hester grew calmer, and with a faint smile, said:

"I think I can take Clarice in my arms now, without frightening her by my emotion. Do you go down and meet them, Marion. I will await them here."

Mrs. Oliver descended the broad flight of steps leading into the yard, and moved swiftly toward the gate. She paused a moment at that point to scan the new arrivals, who were crossing the levee in front of it.

Spencer came first, still holding the hand of a girl of twelve, clad in deep mourning, which afforded a strong contrast to her delicate fairness and blonde curls.

Behind these two came a tall, dignified looking man, in clerical black, on whose arm leaned a fragile looking woman, who could not have been less than fifty years of age.

As the flutter of Mrs. Oliver's dress was detected by Clarice, she sprang forward, exclaiming, in a clear vibrant voice:

"Here is Estelle! Oh, sister—darling sister, thank God that we are together again!"

Marion had opened the gate, and as she made a step forward, the child saw that a stranger had come to meet her, and she shrank back trembling and pale, and clung to Herbert as she faltered:

"No, it is not my sister; she must be ill, or she would surely have come to welcome me to our father's house."

"Do not be alarmed, Clarice. Estelle is not ill—only too much agitated to walk this distance. You will find her awaiting you on the gallery." And Marion took the hand that hung by her side, and gently pressed it.

The young girl hurriedly said:

"Oh! thank you for that assurance. I must go to her. We had better meet before you all join us."

The next moment she was through the gate, flying in the direction of the house with swift steps and wildly beating heart.

Spencer drew Marion to his side, and after a few rapturous words, turned toward those who were approaching, and the four paused a few moments while he presented his betrothed to Miss Lyman and the Reverend Mr. Glenn.

In the mean time Clarice had reached the house, sprang up the steps, and thrown herself into the arms of her who awaited her with a wild, sobbing cry that should have gone to her heart, hardened as it was becoming.

Hester was trembling with agitation, but the only emotion she felt toward that clinging, loving being was one of repulsion.

But she softly and soothingly said:

"My own darling, we are again reunited, never to separate more, I hope, for I have missed you every day, my Clarice."

"And I—I have been lost without you, sister. I felt as if I must die if I did not come to you, after—after *she* went away to live with the angels," sobbed the child. "Poor papa too! he meant to have us both here with him, and he is gone—killed in that dreadful manner—and we have only each other to cling to and love."

"Dearest, we must make up to each other for what we have lost in those who have been taken from us," said the hypocritical voice.

Clarice raised her head suddenly, and looked earnestly in the face that bent over her. She said:

"Your voice has changed a little, sister, from what it used to be. But no wonder, when you have suffered so much. Ah! your sweet face is the same I have always loved so dearly, though I had a silly fear that its beauty had been injured by that railroad accident. You are paler than you used to be, but now that I have come to console you for our common loss, the roses will bloom again upon your cheeks."

"Yes, dear, if you will love and trust me as you have always done, we shall find both health and happiness in our new home. Will you go in with Zelma while I welcome Miss Lyman, or do you prefer to remain here? She will show you to my room, where you can take off your things and arrange your hair."

"Yes, I will go with her, and bathe my face before I meet the others; yet I hate to lose sight of you a moment, Estelle. I shall not be long away, be sure of that."

"The sooner you come back, the better I shall be pleased," was the reply, and Clarice turned to the black, shining face of Zelma, who had been watching the progress of the interview with intense interest. She glibly asked:

"Mus' I take Miss Clarice to your room, or to her'n, Miss Estelle?"

"You heard me say to my room," replied Hester, with a sharp inflexion in her voice, which seemed to arrest the steps of Clarice, for she paused and looked at her again with that yearning, questioning glance with which she had once before regarded her. She said:

"I never heard you speak that way to any one before, sister, and—and—I hope you are not going to turn me out of your room. We have always been together till lately, you know; at Aunt Murray's we shared the same bed, and I thought it would be the same now."

"Good Heavens! does the young idiot expect me to have her always near me?" thought Hester. "I should die under the infliction." But she gently said:

"I have others to think of besides myself, my love, and I could not have so little consideration for Miss Lyman as to separate her pupil from her. I have had an apartment opening from hers fitted up for you, and it is my wish that you shall occupy it—but to-night you can sleep with me, if you wish, and perhaps many other nights, if you are lovable and obedient as I have always found you. I spoke quickly to Zelma just now, but you must remember that I am not used to black servants, and their stupidity sometimes annoys me."

"*I* an't stupid," muttered Zelma, "an mebbe she 'll find it out some of these days."

What this threat meant, she could hardly have explained to herself; but the march of events was yet to prove that, dull as these dark people were considered by Hester, they were to prove her worst enemies in the future that lay before her.

Without another word Clarice followed the girl, and Hester went forward to receive the new arrivals, who by this time were ascending the steps.

Miss Lyman had left the arm of Mr. Glenn, and advancing before the others, she took Hester in her arms, and tenderly said:

"My dear child, I am most happy to be near you again, and I hope the choice your aunt made of a teacher for your sister was satisfactory to you."

With effusion, Hester replied:

"Dear Miss Lyman, nothing could have afforded me more pleasure than to welcome you beneath my own roof. Welcome to Le Bocage—a thousand times welcome, dear friend of my brightest and best days!"

"Thank you, my love; but do not speak in that way. You are under a cloud of sorrow now, but that will naturally pass away, and many bright and happy years are before you. You were always a child of promise; gentle, loving, and true, and of such it has been said that their price is above rubies."

"Dear Miss Lyman, I beg that you will not overestimate me, for I fear that I have greatly changed since those days. I have had much to bear, and I have not been made better by what has happened to me. Your goodness will excuse my shortcomings, I know, but I am not the same Estelle you used to pet and think so highly of."

She felt a strange pleasure in using this common form of words which told the literal truth, yet was far from conveying any such idea to the listener. Miss Lyman smiled affectionately, and said:

"You always had one of the best Christian traits, my child, but the humility which underrates is as objectionable as the pharisaical spirit which the Scriptures condemn."

By this time Herbert Spencer was approaching with the stranger, and after warmly shaking hands with Hester, he presented Mr. Glenn to her. She welcomed him with graceful ease, and led the way into the house.

Leaving Mrs. Oliver with the two gentlemen, Hester went herself with Miss Lyman to the handsome apartment which had been prepared for her. She determined to be deficient in no attention to her new inmate, which the affectionate relations once existing between Estelle Landry and that lady would render becoming, and indeed necessary, if she would maintain the part she had undertaken to play.

A bright lamp was burning on the dressing-stand, and when the two stood in front of it, Miss Lyman said:

"Let me have a good look at you, Estelle. My eyes are not so good as they once were, and in the twilight without, I could only see that you are still as fair to look at as before that cruel accident. We heard that your head was severely hurt, and Clarice feared that the beauty of your face was marred, and that was why you would not come to Newport before you left for the South."

There was a dull throbbing at the heart of Hester as she turned, with extreme reluctance, to allow the light to fall full upon her face. This seemed to her the supreme moment of destiny, and if Miss Lyman, who had known Estelle Landry so thoroughly, did not detect the imposture, she would be safe from the scrutiny of others.

Hester felt herself to be growing pale, though she struggled hard to maintain perfect composure. She was far from successful, but luckily for her, Miss Lyman attributed her emotion to the allusion to the railroad accident, and reproached herself for referring to it.

The luminous and penetrating gray eyes were fixed tenderly and earnestly upon Hester's face, and an expression of surprise came into them as they scanned her features. Miss Lyman said:

"How rapidly sorrow has matured you, my love! You were a bright girl when I saw you last, and now you are a woman, with a maturity of expression I scarcely thought you would attain under twenty-five years of age. Grief has been a hard teacher to you, my dear child. If it has destroyed the sweet charm of budding youth, I hope it has brought you something more enduring, and of more worth."

Hester deprecatingly said:

"I am afraid that you have erected so high a standard for me that I can never come up to it, dear Miss Lyman. I am not as good, nor as even tempered as I used to be, and you will find much to lament in your model pupil. I am tempted to do so many strange things, that I sometimes think my brain must have received a shock, when I was so severely hurt, from which it has not yet recovered. I should have rested longer at that farm-house to which we were taken, but I was willful, and would go on to Boston before I was in a condition to travel. I mention this to account for any change you may discover in me; my memory is uncertain, and I sometimes make the strangest confusion in names and dates, though I make every effort to conceal my real condition from those around me. I shall doubtless recover in time, and I beg that you will not mention this confidence to any one."

Miss Lyman regarded her compassionately as she made this artful statement intended to account for her lack of knowledge of the actual past of Estelle Landry's life. Any reference to events in which she was supposed to have taken a part, and of which she might betray her ignorance, might now be safely made, for she had astutely provided an excuse that would render her friend only more tender and considerate toward her.

Clarice, conducted by the officious Zelma, came in with her radiant hair in neat order, and a bright smile on her lips. She threw her arms around Hester's waist, and looked up to her with loving eyes.

Hester clasped the child to her bosom, but Clarice withdrew from the embrace which she felt had been carelessly given. Her intuitions were very quick, and she comprehended that some great change had come over the sister who had once so ardently responded to her caresses, but from what cause she could not divine. She consoled herself with the belief that all would come right after a few days of intimate association, and their old relations be reëstablished. She tremulously said:

"You are very kind, sister, and I shall be glad to see my room. Zelma has been telling me what beautiful furniture you ordered from New Orleans specially for me."

Clarice was delighted with her room, and nothing happened during the evening to arouse Hester's fears. But she did not sleep much that night. She had safely passed the ordeal she had so much feared, and she had few apprehensions for the future, if Macon would only be reasonable enough to give her up, and accept from her money in lieu of the hand she had promised him, yet she was restless with a great dread that to her seemed unaccountable.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

—Strong minds, like hardy evergreens, are most verdant in winter; when feeble ones, like tender summer plants, are leafless.

IN THE CLOVER FIELDS.

BY NATHAN D. URNER.

The scent of hay is rife in the air,
  And is blown the green lane over,
And the breezy bees boom everywhere
  Among the red-topped clover.
I hear the woodpecker pounding a tree,
  And a lapwing's cry from the meadows,
And a linnet's note rings merry and free
  From the depths of the hemlock's shadows.

But a gloom is over the fair scene thrown,
  Its beauty and music are banished,
For now I roam the green lane *alone*,
  And sigh for a form that has vanished—
For her who was once my comrade sweet,
  A phantom of summers olden,
When we wandered afar with idle feet,
  And to none but ourselves were beholden.

All nature seemed but the soft reflex
  Of our love, as we loitered together—
A love which no storm could trouble or vex—
  Always fair, sunshiny weather.
The hum of bees, the voices of birds,
  The sound of the rivulet falling,
Were the tones of our hearts, in unsyllabled words,
  Each to the other calling.

There is the seat where she loved to rest,
  Where I took her white hands and pressed them;
The turf is still with wild flowers dressed,
  Though darkened the eyes that blessed them.
Our little boat still swings in the stream,
  But the sport of the ripples only;
Yonder winds our woodland path, like a dream,
  But silent and sad and lonely.

And there is the pool where, many a day,
  For the pure pond lilies I waded;
Its waters have nearly dried away,
  The lilies all have faded.
And this is the lane that passes below
  To the little church in the hollow;
No matter how lonely it seemeth now,
  Its course I even must follow.

For it skirts the church-yard, gray with age,
  Where long she has softly slumbered,
And I make it my frequent pilgrimage,
  When my heart is sore encumbered.
The peace of the spot is a holy peace,
  And here I may one day merit,
From trouble and sorrow and grief surcease,
  For body and heart and spirit.

* * *

PATTY'S PLOT.

BY AMY RANDOLPH.

"Loves me better than the whole world, does he?" said Patty Peronel, shaking her brown tendrilly rings of hair over a faded rose-bud and a knot of crumpled ribbon. "Oh, I dare say; but you see," gravely addressing space, "I've heard that sort of thing before. Love must be an awful epidemic now-a-days. And all the world's a lottery; and I, for one, don't want to draw a blank. O dear, dear! how I wish I could really see into a man's heart! How I wish I had any means of ascertaining whether Ralph Penrhyn really cares for me, or whether he has heard of Uncle Hutchinson's ten thousand dollars. O *dear* me!" and Patty sighed a sigh deep enough to stir all the red cinnamon roses that were nodding their turbaned crests at the casement.

And then she jumped up, and went about her business.

Which chanced to be girl hunting just then. For Mrs. Maurice Peronel, Patty's cousin, was chronically in the suds, so to speak, on the domestic service question, and our Patty knew the inside of every Intelligence office in town.

"It's a cook this time, is it, Bessie?" said she.

"A cook," said Bessie. "O, Patty, Patty, *don't* get married and go to housekeeping. It takes all the romance out of one."

"I don't know but what you are right," Patty assented reflectively. And away she went to the Intelligence office.

It was crowded, on this hot July day, with the miscellaneous assemblage of forlorn feminity who are always seeking situations, and like the lover in the "Mistletoe Bough," "find them not." Patty looked round dubiously. She was something of a physiognomist, and she did not exactly like the looks of the raw material wherewith she was surrounded.

"I had better bide my time a little," she thought, and down she nestled into the corner of a prodigious sofa, to wait with what patience she might.

As she seated herself, the shrill piping voice of an old lady beyond made silence vocal.

"You won't do for me," said she. "No followers—that's my rule. My kitchen an't a place for all the loafin' fellers in town to smoke in. Ask anybody in Darlingville, if you want to know what kind of a housekeeper Rachel Penrhyn is. Everybody in Darlingville knows *me*. No followers, no ribbons, and no hoop-skirts."

"I guess then, ma'am, you won't do for *me*," said the Milesian damsel, with an indignant toss of her jockey-hatted head; "I don't go nowheres I can't have my young man come and see me of a Saturday night."

Patty Peronel listened with mischievously sparkling eyes and cherry cheeks. This, then, was the eccentric Aunt Rachel, of whom Ralph had often told her—the grim old spinster who "kept house" all by herself, in the quaint village of Darlingville, where the elms lined the streets like green-kirtled sentinels, and everybody went to bed at half-past nine o'clock.

Very sudden resolves will sometimes rush through our brains, lightning express fashion, in a short space of time, and almost before the shrill tones of Miss Rachel's falsetto voice had ceased to vibrate on the air, Patty Peronel stood dipping odd little courtesies before her.

"If you please, ma'am, would *I* suit?"

Miss Rachel glared through her moon-shaped spectacle glasses at the trim figure robed in sober gray.

"You, child!" quoth she. "Why, you're such a chit of a thing!"

"I am nineteen, ma'am!"

"What can you do?"

"A little of everything, ma'am," Patty answered demurely.

"What's your name?"

"Martha, ma'am, please."

Apparently the cross-examination that followed was satisfactory to Miss Rachel Penrhyn, for she finally told Patty she might "come and try" at seven dollars a month.

"I may go home for my clothes, ma'am?" said Patty, with drooping eyelids and hands folded.

"Yes; but be sure you meet me at the railroad station at four precisely."

Patty promised, and ran home to Mrs. Peronel.

"Where's my girl?" demanded the matron.

"I haven't got any. I'm a girl myself, Bessie—at seven dollars a month, and—no followers!"

"Patty, what under the sun do you mean?"

And Patty explained.

"Don't scold, Bessie—now don't, that's a darling. I'm Caliph Haroun Alraschid in disguise, that's all. It will be such fun! Where's my gingham dress, and the little linen collars, and the big bib aprons? For my bubble would burst altogether if I shouldn't meet Aunt Rachel at the station at four o'clock precisely."

What a change it was, from the swarming city streets, radiating scintillations of heat from every curb-stone, to the old Penrhyn house, where the century old elms formed a green canopy of shade, and the clove-pinks and old-fashioned blue-bells blossomed along the borders. And "Martha," the new maid, settled into the grooves at once, as if she had lived all her life under Aunt Rachel's roof-tree.

"I believe I am going to like her," said Aunt Rachel. "But then, of course, a new broom sweeps clean; and I'm 'most afraid to believe in any one, since Keturah Smith experienced religion and then run away with my silver sugar-basin!"

"This is Mr. Ralph's room, is it?" said Martha, with her hands in her ruffled pockets, as she stood regarding the apartment that had just been opened to be dusted and aired.

"Yes—this is my nephew's room," said the old lady. "He comes out once in a while, and I always keep it ready for him. I've no family of my own, you see, and Ralph seems very near to me."

"Dear me!" said Martha, "what a lot of photographs over the mantel!"

Miss Rachel nodded.

"That middle one—it looks a little bit like you, Martha, I declare—"

"Does it?" lisped Martha innocently, as she looked into her own smiling, saucy eyes, under a fringe of crépe hair.

"It's my nephew's sweetheart," went on the garrulous old lady—"the gal he loves the best in all the world."

"Are they engaged?" Martha asked, the tell-tale roses dying her cheek as she gently spoke.

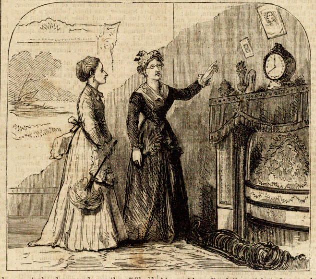
"Well, no, not exactly. I guess she's rather pretty, but she's got nothing of her own, you see; and there's Almira Playfair—the one on the left-hand edge of the chimney—"

"The one with the twisted nose?" roguishly asked Martha.

"Her nose may be a little to one side," severely remonstrated Miss Rachel; "but handsome is that handsome does, and Almira has thirty thousand dollars in the bank."

"My!" cried Martha, opening her eyes very wide. "Thirty thousand dollars, ma'am! I should think Mr. Ralph would marry her at once."

"So he ought," said Miss Rachel, rubbing her spectacle glasses vehemently. "She'd have him in a minute—so all the neighbors say. But he's just possessed in love with that little Peronel girl. He'd rather work for a crust a day, with her to share it, he says, than to marry Almira Playfair with all her money."



"That is noble of him," cried Martha, with sparkling eyes. "I respect him for it. I—I mean I *should* respect him for it if—"

"Well, I don't see what it is to you, one way or the other," tartly broke in Mrs. Rachel. "Just give the room a good dusting, that's all I ask of you, for as like as not Ralph will be here to-night."

"To-night!" cried Martha, aghast.

"Yes, to-night. Why shouldn't he?"

That was just what the little serving damsel could not answer.

"I must go away this very evening," she thought to herself, as she polished away at the claw-footed old mahogany table. "Because if he should come and find me here—Oh, good gracious!"

She dropped her duster in dismay, for there stood Ralph Penrhyn before her, with all his six feet of altitude, his brown eyes twinkling mischievously beneath their long lashes.

"Patty," he cried, "is this the story of Cinderella and the Little Glass Slipper?"

"No!" she answered, coloring like a whole garden of roses. "It's the story of a naughty little girl who couldn't be satisfied without finding out whether—"

"Whether Ralph Penrhyn really loved her or not," he finished the hesitating sentence. "Well, what do you think?"

The question was what Aunt Rachel thought, some ten minutes later, when she came in, and found her nephew and Martha the housemaid whispering behind the muslin curtains. I know what I should have thought—that a wedding was very imminent.

So it was; and Aunt Rachel consoled herself that, after all, ten thousand dollars was a very snug little fortune.

* * *

AN EXTINGUISHER.

For a full appreciation of the following you ought to have known the parties; and you ought to have been at our Town Meeting and heard "Uncle John" make his speech. But you shall have the story.

Mr. Loren Smangle was a busy man in our village. He was a carpenter by trade, and a speculator by instinct. He built several houses, and upon the premise that he owned much real estate he gained considerable credit. He was constant in his attendance at church, and outwardly he was a very moral man. He was a heavily framed man, with a stoop in his shoulders, and his voice was attuned to a pious twang. In time it came to pass that Smangle failed—became bankrupt,—and when his creditors looked for his property they found that he had put it all out of his hands; all his real estate had been deeded to a relative who lived in an adjoining town—and his creditors got nothing. In short, when Smangle came to make a disclosure of his effects in court he was able to show that he was possessed of just what was exempt from seizure by law, and nothing more. People whom he owed were wroth, for they knew that the big piece of land over the mill-brook was his, and they knew he still owned the block of buildings in the village, though he only collected rents as agent of the relative aforesaid. There was no bankrupt act of which he could take advantage of, and judgments held against him would remain good for a score of years.

Among Smangle's creditors was "Uncle" John Watcher, a quaint old genius, who had been "Captain" in his day, and who was now settled down to the cleaning and tinkering of clocks and the heavier and grosser kind of watches. Uncle John attended the same church with Smangle, and, like a Christian man, made no outcry against his conniving brother, though deep down in his heart he felt a bitterness which he could not hide.

Immediately after his failure Smangle commenced the erection of a residence upon the land over the mill-brook, and there he laid out a farm, doing all, of course, in the name of the distant relative,—and when the house was finished he moved into it with his family. The months passed on, and those who held judgments against him looked in vain for visible property upon which to lay an attachment. Smangle was not to be caught in that way.

At length Smangle wanted the town to accept and keep in repair a road which he had opened across the mill-brook, and in the warrant calling the next town meeting he got an article inserted "To see if the Town will lay out and maintain a road commencing—etc., etc.,—running—etc., etc.,—to land of said Smangle."

The day of Town Meeting came, and Smangle was on hand to press his claim for the road, and he had engaged several of the smart talkers to advocate the measure. Finally that article in the warrant was reached, and Squire Cummings made an able plea in behalf of the project. It seemed only fair and just that the road should be laid out, and so it would have been had not an unexpected extinguisher been put upon the measure. Uncle John Watcher arose and mounted the steps leading to the chairman's desk.

"Mr. Moderator," said he, in his mellow, measured tones, "I am certainly in favor of granting all proper privileges, and I am also in favor of adopting all necessary plans for improvement. But, sir, before the town votes to lay out this road would it not be well to know where the work is to end? We do not wish to start a thoroughfare which may find no termination on earth. This article of the warrant specifies that the proposed road shall run to '*land of said Smangle.*' Now, sir, *I, for one, have a great desire to know just where any parcel of land belonging to said Smangle may be located!*"

The meeting very quickly saw the point. Smangle, pale and red by turns, tried to explain that there had been a mistake made in drawing up the article in the warrant, but the merriment of the multitude overwhelmed him, and he suffered the article to be passed over. The road was finished in course of time, but not at the expense of the town. C.

* * *

SCIENCE.

Medical science is making progress in Japan. The government recently decided to establish a school of medicine at Rioto, after the model of the hospital at Leipsic, and an agent was sent to Germany to secure the services of a qualified German physician as director of the establishment. His choice, which was made on the recommendation of the professors in the University of Leipsic, has fallen upon Dr. Junker, who holds the diplomas of Austrian and English schools, and served as a surgeon in both the Crimean and Franco-Prussian wars. One of the instructions to the agent was, all other things being equal, to choose the shorter of two candidates; for as the Japanese are not a tall people, they would naturally receive more sympathy from a person who was not tall himself.

A distinguished young English chemist, Mr. Ernest T. Chapman, was recently killed at Rubeland, in the Hartz region of Germany, by an explosion which completely demolished the bomb-proof laboratory in which he was working at the time. As his three assistants were also killed, the cause of the disaster can only be conjectured, but it is attributed to nitric methyl ether, an exceedingly explosive substance, upon which Mr. Chapman was experimenting without an adequate appreciation of its treacherous nature. He was only twenty-six years old, but had already attained a high position as an original investigator.

At the recent annual meeting of the National Educational Association in Boston, one of the professors at Harvard University described the system of instruction in Natural History there, which is practical from the outset. The new student is first directed to go out into nature, and secure some living thing, it matters not what—a bird, an insect, or a serpent. This he must then describe in the minutest manner, the description being submitted to his instructor for correction; and so an interest in the study is inspired at its very threshold, and maintained throughout by similar means.

The amount of metallic iron in different articles of aliment has formed the subject of some recent investigations by Boussingault, the French chemist, who finds the maximum quantity in the blood of hogs, and the minimum in carrots. Although the red color of the blood of the higher animals is usually attributed to the iron which it contains, the white blood of the invertebrates—that is, such creatures as are destitute of a backbone—is just as rich in the metal. Green plants contain no more than those which are of a paler color, as, for example, the mushroom.

An attempt is now being made in England to introduce a system of instruction for the deaf and dumb, by which they are taught to read from the lips of others, and to use articulate speech. This system is universally adopted in Holland and Germany, where its practicability appears to have been fully demonstrated. Many persons know, from their experience with those only partially deaf, how readily they can be made to understand the speaker's lowest tones simply by watching the motion of his lips.

Two specimens of so-called "eatable earth"—one from Lapland and the other from South Persia—have recently been analyzed by Dr. Schmidt of Dorssert, who finds that from Lapland wholly deficient in nutritive qualities, only serving to stay the pangs of hunger for the moment, while the Persian specimen contains carbonic acid, and performs the office of what is commonly called baking powder. Both these earths are eaten only in combination with flour made into bread.

The development and transformations of the common house fly is announced, by the Boston Society of Natural History, as the subject for memoirs to be offered in competition for its annual Walker prizes in 1873. The amount to be awarded is from one hundred to sixty dollars to the writer of the best essay, according to the merit of the production, and a sum not exceeding fifty dollars to the author of that next in value. All memoirs must be sent in by April 1st, 1873.

Professor Winlock of Harvard University is now engaged in taking a series of large photographs of the more prominent celestial bodies, as seen through the great refracting telescope at Cambridge. Their usefulness for purposes of instruction in schools and academies will undoubtedly be very great, in addition to the interest which they cannot fail to possess for the scientific student.

A correspondent at North Conway, New Hampshire, writes us that a magnificent auroral display was witnessed there on the evening of the 8th of August last. At midnight it covered nearly the whole sky, radiating from the zenith to the horizon, and in the east was a conspicuous patch of red, in marked contrast to the greenish hue of most of the streamers.

We learn from a note lately read before the Paris Academy of Sciences, that the use of morphia in combination with chloroform is believed by some physicians of high standing to lessen the danger which ordinarily accompanies the administration of the latter drug.

An intelligent resident of Manilla, the capital of the Phillipine islands, expresses the opinion that there is probably at least one earthquake every day at some spot in that archipelago.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Philadelphia says: "Will you please answer the following questions in your Notices to Correspondents, and by so doing you will oblige me much, and I doubt not, many other young readers of your valuable paper. Is eloquence innate, or can it be acquired by study? In order to become an eloquent orator, what must one study? Will you please name some text-books? What constitutes a statesman? In order to become a statesman, what text-books must one study? Worcester defines statesman as 'a politician,' but the difference between a statesman and a politician at the present day is certainly very great. Boutwell says, 'Statesmanship is the greatest and noblest of human pursuits.' If one wishes to become distinguished, either in a profession or a trade, there seems to be a definite plan, by pursuing which, with constant application and perseverance, he may attain to the position he desires. But to become a statesman, or an eloquent orator, seems to me to be very difficult, because there is no definite plan to follow. We are told that Daniel Webster had a greater mind than any man of the nineteenth century. We Americans hold that 'all men are created free and equal;' but can all men be born equal, when some are endowed with genius and others not? We hold that any one, be he ever so poor and humble, may attain to a high position in this free land of ours, by industry and study, and by persevering and laboring to attain to that position. But suppose one is endowed by his Creator with genius, with a great mind and superior talents, and another is born of ignorant parents and endowed with none of those qualities, can the latter, by studying and working, ever attain to the greatness of the former and become his equal in mental capacities? Although others think differently, I should think, for one reason at least, that he might, for the Almighty is just, and for Him to prevent any one from becoming great and good, though he labor ever so hard, would seem unjust. Please explain it. Horace says, 'Poeta nascitur; non fit.' Is that true? If so, does not God again seem unjust by creating one with a power so great and another without it? To read the poetry of Longfellow and Tennyson and the masterpieces of such statesmen as Webster, Clay and Sumner, and to hear such orators as Gough and Phillips, delights me. To become a poet, a statesman and an orator, I feel I would strive night and day; but it is not clear to me that I could do so, even though I worked ever so hard. If you will be so kind as to answer my questions, and give me any information in your power in regard to the above subjects, you will confer a great favor on a reader and subscriber. The least advice and information will be thankfully received. The more advice and information you deign to give, the more indebted I will be to you." The equality with which all men are created is not of endowments, but of rights. There is no injustice in dividing powers unequally. The happiness of the poorly endowed is often greater than that of the richly endowed. Horace's and similar expressions are to be taken "generally." No education will make a prosaic man a poet; but a born poet has to study and cultivate his mind. Statesmen of the true kind only need honesty, intelligence, observation, and they will manage a department of government as they would that of a firm in business. Models of eloquence may be read with advantage, but the great thing is to have correct ideas, right feelings, a "single eye," and enough of clear simple language to convey your ideas. There is danger of true simple common-sense being drowned in floods of American "eloquence." If the country could be floated on wind-bags, she would be safe for a generation. Avoid "eloquence." Be sensible, honest, pure, and urge these qualities on others, and never mind the eloquence. He who makes it his aim generally ends in being an attitudinizing declaimer. There ought to be an asylum for all such, near the top of Mount Washington. Really eloquent men do not aim at eloquence.

Quandary (Oregon City) sends us the following letter, which discloses a genuine touch of nature and real life. He says: "Having read your valuable paper for some time, I would like to ask for some advice. I am a young man thirty years of age, and of respectable parentage, but have been considered poor until lately. Previous to this, I had been waiting on a young lady of an aristocratic family. I am a surveyor, and not having courage to present my case to the young lady in person, I waited until I had gone on a surveying expedition, when I wrote her concerning my love. I received no answer. On my return, her brother's safe being the most convenient place for that purpose, I left $5,000 there until I could deposit it in the bank. The next morning I received a note from her accepting my offer of marriage. I am in a quandary whether or not to withdraw from the engagement. Please advise me." You should not act hastily in such a matter. State the case frankly and kindly to the young lady, and hear what she has to say about it. It looks, of course, as though it was the five thousand dollars which made her accept your offer, but it may not have been so. At any rate, she is entitled to a hearing before you come to a final determination of the matter. Besides, if it really is the five thousand dollars which she is after, she might go for it in a suit for breach of promise, in case you should now back out of the engagement. Your letter to her asking her to be your wife, and her letter to you acceding to your request, make a complete contract of marriage in the eye of the law, and fix your case as completely as it is possible to fix any such matter. Be cautious.

Ida and Bell (Pennsylvania) say: "Two young girls are in trouble, and solicit your advice. We are cousins and orphans, residing with a maiden aunt, and are aged respectively seventeen and nineteen. There is a young man living near us whom we have known from childhood. We were always the best of friends, but as the years advanced, our friendship ripened into love. He has often made the remark to our aunt, that at some future day he should want one of us for a wife, but has never said which. Lately his attentions have been more marked toward the oldest lady, but she says she thinks if he proposes to her that it will be her duty to refuse him, for she knows it will break the heart of the younger, and she loves her very dearly. Now, shall she refuse, provided he offers himself, and make three lives miserable, or accept him, and see her more than sister suffer? Please pardon us for writing this long letter, and do not throw it aside as unworthy of notice, but answer at your earliest convenience, and relieve two aching hearts." Ida and Bell have gone a little too fast, and as matters are now, have to pay the penalty. The probability is that the proposal for one, if it comes, will gently cure the other, and avert such a tragedy as is anticipated. At least we should hope so, and it is a maxim with us "never to cross a bridge till we come to it." Sweet seventeen will meet another appreciative heart, and save *it* from breaking.

Kentuckian is in the following difficulty: "Two young gentlemen—brothers—are paying attention to me. Whenever I am out of an evening, one or the other is sure to accompany me home. Now I want to know some way to dismiss one gentleman kindly and politely. I would not hurt his feelings for anything. It must be done in a way that will give him no room to get cross at me, or not done at all. How must I proceed? If these young gentlemen were not brothers, I could very easily tell one to bestow his attentions somewhere else; but if I should do that, the other one might think that I love him, which is something that I would dislike, as he never said that he liked me." We have attempted many things with some success, but we shrink from instructing a lady as to the method of gently intimating to a gentleman that she values him as a friend, but objects to demonstrations of love. Women do such things rightly by instinct, where a man would blunder after seven years' deliberation.

B. Franklin (Frohno, Mo.) says: "I have been a constant reader of your valuable paper, and subscriber part of the time, for the last eighteen years, and for the first time come to you for a little information, which you will please answer through your Notices to Correspondents. What is the meaning of the word *Borgia?* Where did it originate, and in what sense used, and where can I find it? I remember having seen the word in some newspaper at the head of an article on murder, which was headed, 'Borgia No. 2.' By answering you will greatly oblige." Borgia was the name of a Roman family, some of whom enjoyed a bad reputation as poisoners and assassins. The history of the Popes will give you the needed information.

Benton says: "Appreciating the terse and appropriate answers given to correspondents, I appeal to you in an affair of my own, and beg a portion of your good advice. I have been visiting and occupying an agreeable station of intimacy with a young lady of sixteen or seventeen years of age, for about six months. I am twenty years old. Our parents would, I am confident, interpose no objection, save that of youth, to our union. Should I seek an engagement at this time, or wait until we are older, continuing my addresses? I know that the affection I feel for the young lady is reciprocal. Please answer at your earliest convenience." Wait for the maturer judgment of the young lady. In the meantime be very good to her.

Inquirer (Greenpoint) says: "Will you please tell me through your paper if the majority of the male population over twenty-one years of age, in England, rule the country by their votes, and what proportion the voting bears to the population? What I want to get at is, if the majority of Englishmen are entitled to vote." In England the vote is limited to those who pay certain amounts of taxes, or give evidence of high education, and as education extends, the tendency of legislation is to increase the number of voters. We have not the numbers in returns, but we think it likely that a numerical majority of Englishmen are not yet voters.

Lillie Branch (Minn.) writes: "My parents are anxious I should marry a young gentleman, a distant relation, about twenty years of age, with moderate means and good education; but I do not think enough of him to become his wife. He seems to think a great deal of me, but the feeling is not reciprocated. Under the circumstances, what would you advise me to do?" Obey your parents in everything which it is reasonable and right for them to require of you, but never marry a man whom you do not love.

Guy Melville (Richmond, Va.) says: "You will oblige me very much if you will post me on the difference between a coquette and a flirt." There is no difference in principle—or want of principle—but may or may not be in sex. Coquette is applied exclusively to females: flirt, to both males and females, though when applied to men it is used with an adjective, as "a male flirt."

A. F. plaintively asks: "Do you think, if a young lady really loves a young man, and becomes engaged to him, she will flirt with other young men, and also continue a correspondence with a young man she was formerly engaged to?" We do not think any such thing. If a girl really and truly loves a man to whom she is engaged, she will neither flirt nor correspond with other young men.

Pancho (Worcester, Mass.) says: "Will you be so kind as to inform me how the name André is pronounced? I have reference to Major André, of revolutionary reputation." It is pronounced Andray.

Etiquette asks: "Is it proper for a lady and gentleman to shake hands on an introduction? Also, whether it is proper for two gentlemen to shake hands on an introduction?" Yes, if they choose to.

P. O. D.—The charge for registering a letter used to be five cents, but it is now fifteen cents.

Marion says: "I have of late been considerably perplexed in regard to a small matter, or such it will no doubt seem to you. I have no one to advise me, and hence have concluded to seek your kind counsel. There are two gentlemen visiting me, whom I think a great deal of, though I cannot decide which of the two possesses my warmest feelings. Sometimes I am in favor of one, and then again of the other. The first gentleman I have known for some three or four years, during which time we have been quite intimate. He is selfish and jealous-minded. His father is considered very 'well off,' and, as far as financial matters are concerned, I think he would make a very good husband; but his disposition is so singular that at times he will act as though I were all the world to him, and then again he will act just the reverse. The gentleman No. 2 I met about two years ago, and was impressed favorably with him on my introduction; he likewise appeared to be the same with me, and even expressed himself thus. I have treated him quite indifferently, not because of any dislike I bore him, but, as I was undecided as to the nature of my feelings for him, I thought it advisable to act indifferent and see the effect; and, strange to say, he acts more kindly, and shows more attachment for me than ever before. He is ambitious, educated, and rather fine looking. Now which of the two do you think I should select? And, judging from the behavior of each, which do you think cares the most for me, No. 1 or 2?" On the exceedingly slender acquaintance we have with the gentlemen, we throw the weight of our preference into the scale of No. 2. You had better decide cautiously, however, if *you have to decide* between them.

Ezra says: "I am a subscriber to the *Ledger*, and therefore claim a few answers in your answers to correspondents. I read your answers with much interest, and am surprised at the interest you take in them. If it is not imposing too much upon your good-nature, please answer: 1st. After a lady excuses herself and leaves the parlor, is it etiquette for the gentleman to rise as she reënters the parlor again? 2d. After a meal is served, should the gent. go in advance of the lady out of the dining-room? 3d. When a gent. calling on a lady meets in the parlor another gentleman who was the lady's guest, which of the gentlemen should retire first? 4th. I have heard of late that a plain gold ring is more fashionable than a diamond for an engagement ring. Is it true? 5th. What is your opinion of a gentleman's kissing the hand of his lady-love after an engagement? By answering these questions, you will not only give me the desired information, but perhaps many others." 1st. It may not be needful, but it is safe. 2d. The lady goes first unless she takes the gentleman's arm—we greatly dislike the word "gent." We like a complete gentleman—nothing less. 3d. Circumstances and the relations of the parties must determine it. No rule is possible. If you are taking an engagement ring, for example, you may "sit out" any other man. 4th. The lady has a right to choose, and it is absurd to inquire what is "fashionable." Are we free, or slaves to an impersonal thing made by interested nobodies? 5th. Kissing the hand is second best—very good, we presume, when one can do no better.

Julia Ellis (Elgin, O.) says: "I have for several years been an attentive reader of your valuable journal, and always considered the answers to correspondents one of its most useful features, having derived great benefit from their hints and suggestions. Hoping that you will be considerate and give myself and probably others the benefit of your knowledge and experience, I ask the following questions: Ought a lady, upon breaking her engagement with a gentleman, return his letters and whatever else he may have bestowed upon her, and should she insist upon his receiving them, although he wishes her to retain them? Can you inform me where I can obtain a work upon the art of coloring photographs in water-colors? I shall be very grateful if you will answer these questions at your earliest convenience." Much depends on the circumstances which lead to the breaking of an engagement. Prudential reasons might operate, and the parties might remain good friends, in which case a lady might retain gifts, and an honorable man would naturally desire her to do so. But a lady obliged to discard a lover, in circumstances that put friendship out of the question, should return everything. There is a series of English "shilling" books on artistic subjects, to be found where artists' materials are sold, in which you are likely to obtain the information you require. One is on painting in water-colors.

Constant Reader (Yorktown, Delaware Co., Ind.) says: "If you can spare the time, please give me your opinion of this proposition, which has been occupying the attention of a Literary Society in this place for some time: 'There is no sound where there is no ear to hear.' Those supporting this theory hold that sound is produced in the ear, when the vibrations or waves of air produced by a sonorous body reach it. Those opposing this theory hold that sound is an actual existence, thrown off by sonorous bodies in vibrations or waves which are transmitted through the air or other media, and exist as sound independent of the ear, as light exists independent of the eye?" Vibrations are not thrown off from the resonant body, but are impulses given to the air—a foreign body, and radiating from the body according to principles only partially understood. The ear feels the vibration—say at the distance of a hundred yards, and would feel it at any intervening point—say fifty yards. The fair presumption is, that the sound is at every intervening point in all that constitutes *sound-force*, as appears by the fact that loud shouting will dislodge snow and rocks on steep mountain sides.

"Joe Elliott" (Memphis, Tenn.) says: "I have nearly three thousand dollars, which I wish to invest in something that will return me interest. What do you think about Government Bonds being a good investment, and what kind, and how to go about making purchases? I am a single man, about twenty-eight years old, and have been a reader of your paper for fifteen years. Your answers to correspondents have suggested to me to write to you. Please answer in Notices to Correspondents' column of your next issue, and give me what advice you can upon the subject." It would hardly be wise for us to assume the direction of investments. We should feel almost bound to make good any losses coming through our advice. Government bonds are good for investment. The kind that will suit you you can best learn from respectable dealers in securities, who will negotiate the matter for you by correspondence, and for a small commission, which is well earned by a good house. Remember, high interest means low security.

Aggie (Savannah) says: "I am a little girl, a very little girl, because I don't grow enough for my age. I am twelve years old, and of a very inquiring mind—so my mother says. I ask so many questions, because I want to know the meaning of everything I see, hear, or read about. I am a Methodist Sunday-school scholar, and am going to ask you a question that I don't like to ask either my teacher or mother. The Bible says God created only one man and one woman, (Adam and Eve,) and they had two children, both *boys*. Cain slew Abel, and after that went off and got him a *wife*. Won't you please tell me, in your answers to correspondents, *where* Cain got the girl he took for a wife. By so doing you will oblige me ever so much." Cain and Abel must both have married their sisters, an arrangement that became unlawful and improper so soon as the race multiplied and the necessity no longer existed. You might have ventured this question to your mother or your teacher.

J. H. M. (Boston) says: "Being a constant reader of your valuable paper, I write to you for advice in a matter of great importance to me. I am a stammerer. I acquired the habit when a child, by mimicking a playmate. Now what I want to know is this: Is there anything I can do to cure myself of this disagreeable habit? If so, please let me know in your next paper." The method by which stammerers are usually cured of the habit is to drill them thoroughly in slow and distinct enunciation, especially of such words as they are most apt to stammer on. If you would take notice of the words which are most apt to come stammeringly from your lips, and then accustom yourself to enunciate them slowly and clearly, and in all manner of tones, from a whisper to a full-voiced utterance, you would probably overcome the hesitation in your speech.

Inquirer (Ridgeway, North Carolina) says: "I noticed among the answers to correspondents, where a girl asks who did Cain marry, I think you said the mother of Enoch. Now I had just written to the Rev. H. W. Beecher for an answer to that question, and asked him for an answer in the *Ledger*. If he does not answer it, I would like to impose upon your time enough to get an answer. My question was this: Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain killed Abel; afterward Cain, as you say, married Enoch's mother. Now who was Enoch's mother? At the time of Cain's marriage there could have been but three persons on earth—Adam, Eve and Cain. I hope you will not throw this aside." See answer to "Aggie," and revise your spelling of Abel.

J. E. Mosky (Portland) says: "Having for seven years been a regular subscriber to your paper, I now take the liberty of asking a question through its columns. Last Sabbath evening, while walking with an intimate friend, he suddenly, without a word of excuse, left me, and joined the company of a young lady on the opposite side of the street. Since then I have met him, but have passed him with a cold nod, he doing the same. I would like to know whether to demand an apology or not? He is a most cherished friend, and I would deeply regret the loss of his acquaintance." Should he attempt to renew his intimate relations, you should demand and receive an apology before permitting it. Should he not, you will more wisely let him "severely alone."

F. H. Malcolm (Philadelphia) says: "I write to you for advice. I am a young man, nineteen years of age, with a fair education, and am desirous of improving my mind by study of some kind, having a great deal of spare time, but really don't know where to begin, or what I want. If you can appreciate my predicament, and can give me any information as to what course of study to take up, or failing to understand my requirements, can give me wholesome advice, through the columns of the *Ledger*, you will confer a favor." Choose an object in life, and write to us. Meantime, give a careful reading to Dr. Todd's Students' Manual.

"Age Twenty" (Montgomery, Ala.) says: "I wish to trouble you a little, as many others do. Will you be so kind as to answer me through your valuable paper how long Noah was in building the ark, and where the proof can be found? By so doing, you will greatly oblige." All the reliable information we have regarding the building of the ark is in the book of Genesis. Any obscurity in the text you will find cleared up in such a book as *Murphy on Genesis*.

St. John (New York) says: "Will you have the kindness to inform me what the meaning of *multum in parvo* is? Also, what is the correct way to address two or three ladies at once, on meeting them?" *Multum in parvo* means much in a little. On meeting two or three ladies together, you can say, Good-afternoon, ladies, or Good-morning, ladies, as the case may be, at the same time making a bow comprehensive enough to include them all.

A. S. H. (New York) asks: "Was Charles Sumner ever a member of the Democratic party?" Inquire of Charles Sumner, or of the Democratic party.

*** *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*